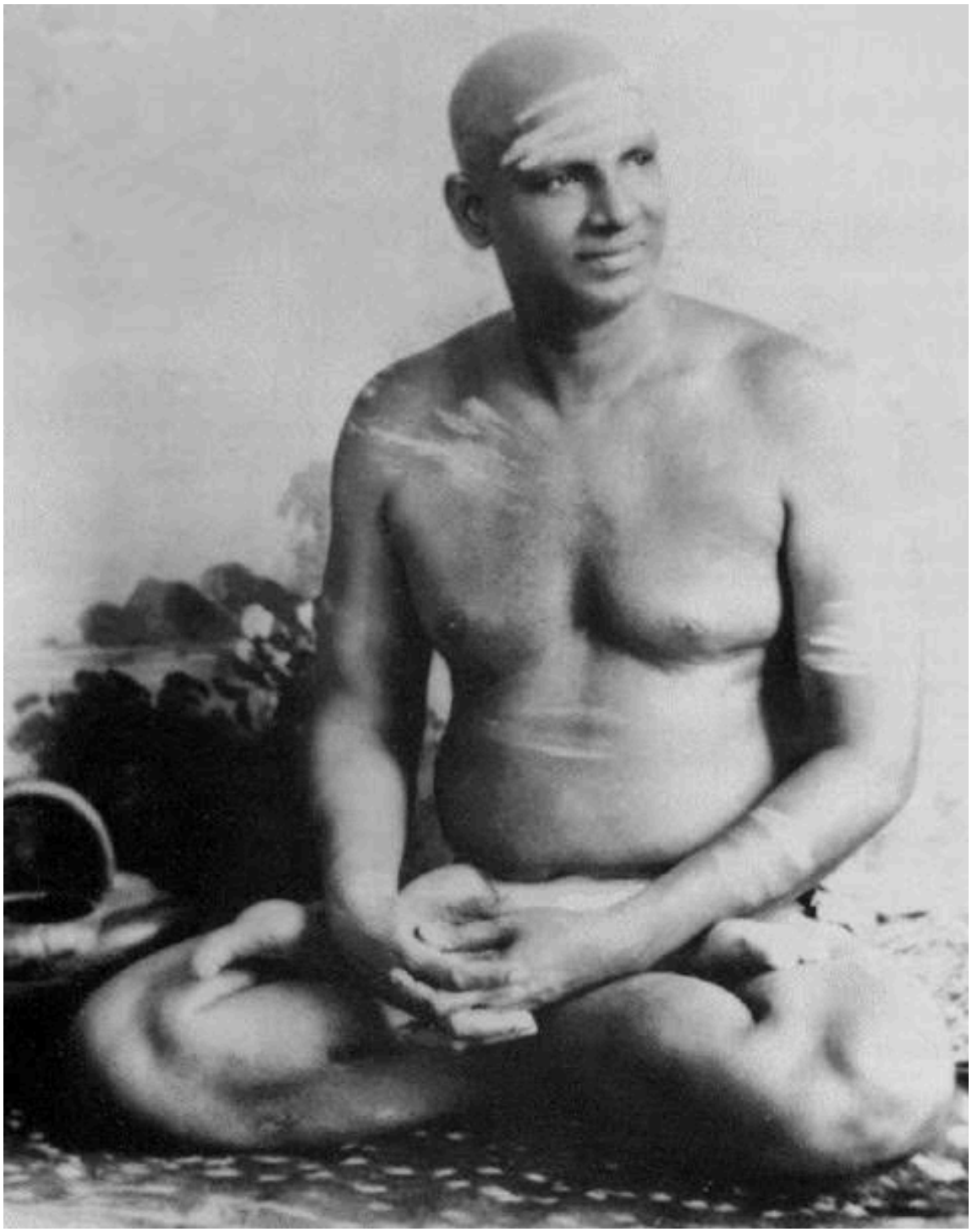

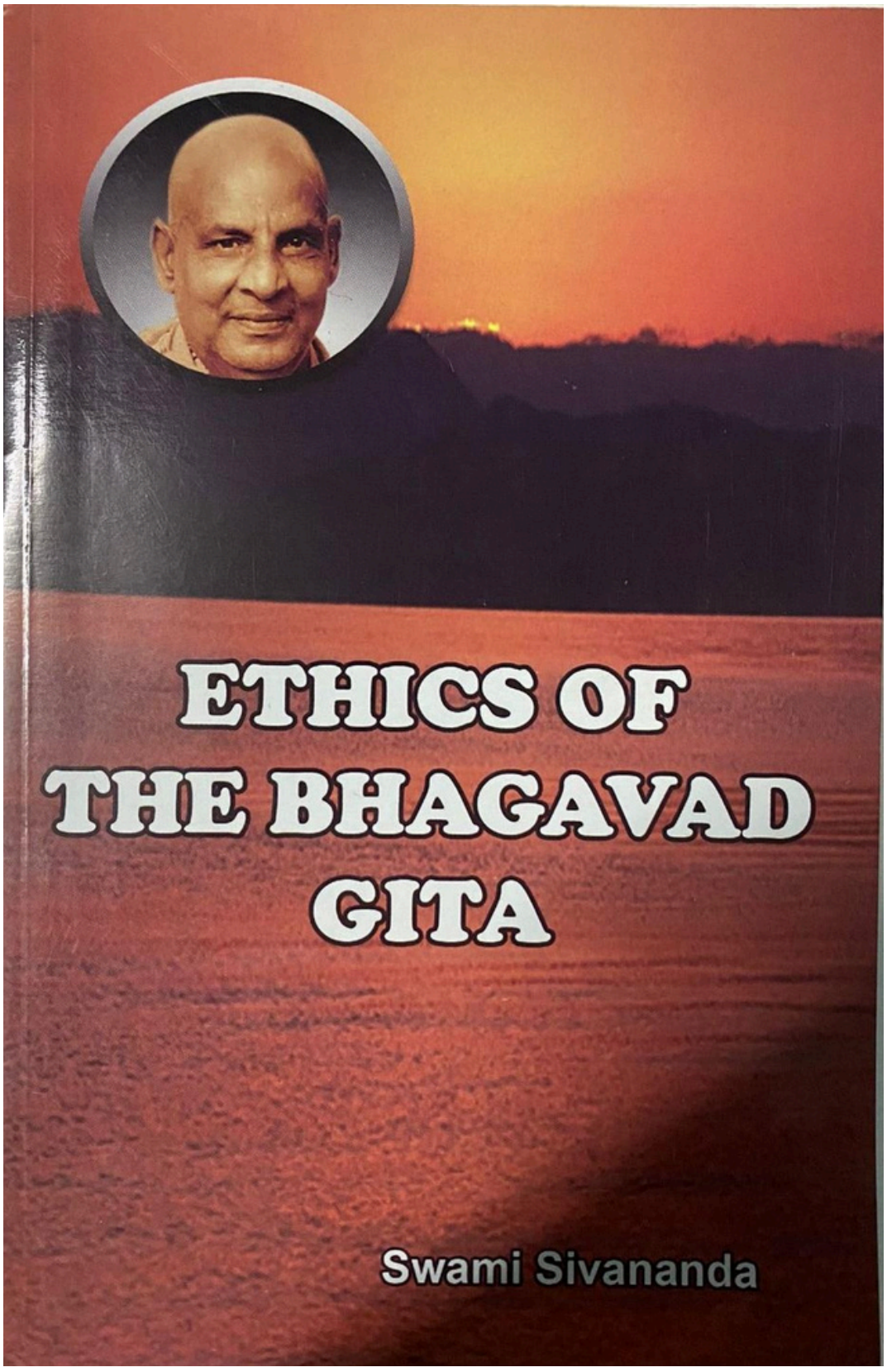
ETHICS OF
THE BHAGAVAD
GITA
Swami Sivananda

SRI SWAMI SIVANANDA

Born on the 8th September, 1887, in the illustrious family of Sage Appayya Dikshitar and several other renowned saints and savants, Sri Swami Sivananda had a natural flair for a life devoted to the study and practice of Vedanta. Added to this was an inborn eagerness to serve all and an innate feeling of unity with all mankind.

His passion for service drew him to the medical career; and soon he gravitated to where he thought that his service was most needed. Malaya claimed him. He had earlier been editing a health journal and wrote extensively on health problems. He discovered that people needed right knowledge most of all; dissemination of that knowledge he espoused as his own mission.

It was divine dispensation and the blessing of God upon mankind that the doctor of body and mind renounced his career and took to a life of renunciation to qualify for ministering to the soul of man. He settled down at Rishikesh in 1924, practised intense austerities and shone as a great Yogi, saint, sage and Jivanmukta.

In 1932 Swami Sivananda started the Sivanandashram. In 1936 was born The Divine Life Society. In 1948 the Yoga-Vedanta Forest Academy was organised. Dissemination of spiritual knowledge and training of people in Yoga and Vedanta were their aim and object. In 1950 Swamiji undertook a lightning tour of India and Ceylon. In 1953 Swamiji convened a 'World Parliament of Religions'. Swamiji is the author of over 300 volumes and has disciples all over the world, belonging to all nationalities, religions and creeds. To read Swamiji's works is to drink at the Fountain of Wisdom Supreme. On 14th July, 1963 Swamiji entered Mahasamadhi.

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Sri SwamiSivananda

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Soon after Sri Swami Sivananda's dynamic All-India Tour in 1950, the idea occurred to him that a book must be written on the "Ethics of the Bhagavad Gita". This precious and highly inspiring volume is the fruit of that Sat-Sankalpa.

These illuminating essays on the Gita were first published by the "Voice of Sivananda" the official organ of the Divine Life Society, Madurai Branch.

A series of essays on "The Lessons of the Bhagavad Gita" which, too, were published serially in that Journal, are also included in the present volume.

We are confident that this volume would prove to be of great benefit to seekers after Truth.

-THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY

GITA-BIBLE OF HUMANITY

GITA-BIBLE OF HUMANITY

(Sri SwamiSivananda)

Gita is the cream of the Upanishads. It is the crest-jewel of Mahabharata. It is an epitome of all the Vedic teachings.

Lord Krishna gave His Gita to Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra and through Arjuna to the whole world at large.

Gita is an Upanishad. It is Brahma Vidya, the science of Brahman. It is Yoga Sastra. It is the Bible of humanity at large.

The Upanishads are the cows, the Divine cowherd Krishna is the milkman, Arjuna is the calf, a wise man is the drinker of the milk and the nectar-like Gita is the immortal milk.

The teachings of the Gita are valid for all times and for all religious life.

He who is assiduously practising the teachings of the Gita in his daily life is liberated. He is not tainted by Karma.

Millions of people have found comfort, solace and happiness in this great work. It serves as a light to all. It sets forth the fundamental principles of religion and Divine Life.

If anyone lives on the spirit of even one verse of the Gita, if he meditates on the significance of the Sloka, he will attain immortal bliss.

Gita frees man from sorrow and delusion and the chains of Samsara and guarantees him emancipation here and hereafter.

Practice of the teaching of a single verse of the Gita is sufficient to bring about a great revolution in one's mind and a complete transformation of one's life.

SAPTA SLOKI GITA

ओमित्येकाक्षरं ब्रह्मव्याहरन्मामनुस्मरन्।
यःप्रयाति त्यजन्देहंसयातिपरमां गतिम्॥

1. Uttering the one-syllabled OM-the Brahman-andremembering Me, he who departs, leaving the body, attains the Supreme Goal. (Ch. VIII-13)

स्थाने हृषीकेश तवप्रकीर्त्याजगत्प्रहृष्यत्यनुरज्यतेच।
रक्षांसि भीतानि दिशो द्रवन्ति,सर्वे नमस्यन्ति चसिद्धसंघाः॥

2. It is meet, O Hrishikesha! that the world delightsand rejoicesinThy praise; Rakshasas fly in fear to all quarters, and all the hosts ofSiddhasbowto Thee.(Ch.XI—36)

सर्वतःपाणिपादं तत्सर्वतोऽक्षिशिरोमुखम्।
सर्वतःश्रुतिमल्लोकेसर्वमावृत्यतिष्ठति॥

3. With hands and feet everywhere,witheyes,headsandmouthseverywhere, with ears everywhere, He exists in the world,envelopingall. (Ch.XIII-13)

कविंपुराणमनुशासितारमणोरणीयांसमनुस्मरेद्यः।
सर्वस्यधातारमचिन्त्यरूपमादित्यवर्णंतमसःपरस्तात्॥

4. He who meditates on the Omniscient, the Ancient,theRuler(ofthe whole world), minuter than an atom, the Supporter of all, of form inconceivable,effulgentlike the Sun and beyond the darkness (of ignorance) at the time of death, goes totheSupremeResplendent Purusha. (Ch. Vill-9)

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थंप्राहुरव्ययम्।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित्॥

5. They (the wise people) speak of the indestructible Asvattha having its root above and branches below, whose leaves are the metres or hymns; he who knows it is a knower of the Vedas(ChXV-1)

सर्वस्यचाहंहृदिसन्निविष्टोमत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनंच।
वेदैश्चसर्वैरहमेववेद्योवेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम्॥

6. I am seated in the hearts of all; from Meare memory,knowledge, as well as their absence, born. I am verily that which has to be knownby alltheVedas; I am indeed the author of Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas also am I(Ch.XV-15)

नि्निा भव ि्द्धक्तो ि्द्यांजी िां निस्कु रु ।
ीिवैष्यमसयुकुतत्वैवात्ानिंत्पिरायिः॥

7. Fix thy mind on Me: be devoted to Me,sacrifice toMe,bowdown to Me; having thus united thy (whole self) to Me, taking Me as theSupreme Goal,thoushalt surely come unto Me. (Ch. IX-34)

EKA SLOKI GITA

यत्रयोगेश्वरःकृष्ियित्रपाथो धनुधराः
त्रिश्रीमवजायोभमूर्धुवाानीमिमिमिा

Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga,whereverisParthathe wielder of the bow, there are prosperity, victory, happiness and firmpolicy; suchis my conviction. (Ch. XVIII-78)

PRATIJNA GITA

(The Song of Assurance)

Gita has a message for the solace, peace, freedom and perfection of all human beings. In this book alone, the Lord gives His definite word of assurance or promise and exhortation at every step to the aspirantHe says:

नेहामभक्रिनाशोऽमस्प्रित्यवायोन्नमेवद्यै।
स्वल्पिप्यस्य धिस्ा य त्रायि ेहो भयि् ॥

In this there is no loss of effort, noris theretransgression. Even a little of this knowledge protects from great fear(Ch. II-40)

पाथा नैवैह निुत्र मवनाशस्स्यि मवद्यै े।
न मह कल्यिाकृत्कमश्चद् ्दुगुमिंाि गेच्छमि ॥

O Son of Pritha, neither in this world, nor in the next life is there destruction for him, none, verily, who does good, comes to grief. (Ch. VI- 40.)

मक्षप्रं ंभवमि धात्ाशिश्वच्छामन्मिनगच्छमि।
कौन्ेयिप्रमिजानीमहनिैभक्तःप्रिश्यमि॥

Soon he becomes righteous and attainsto eternalpeace, OKaunteya, know thou for certain that My devotee is never destroyed(ChIX-31)

अनन्यामश्चन्यिन्ी िं ये ेजनाः पयुपाासिे
ेषां मनत्यामभयुक्तानां ंयोगक्षिें वहाम्यहि् ॥

To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, ever harmonious, bring full security. (Ch. IX —22)

अमप चेदमस पापेभ्ेयःसवेभ्यः पापकृत्तिः।
सवंर्ज्ञिनप्लवेनैवैवृमृजनं संरिरष्यमस॥

Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners, yetthou shaltverily cross over all sin by the raft of knowledge. (Ch. IV-36)

नि्निा भव िद्भक्तिोद्याजी िं ंनिस्कुरु।
ीविेष्यमस सत्यं ंिेप्रमिजानेमप्रयोमसे॥

Fix thy mind on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrificeto Me,bowdown to Me. Thou shalt come even to Me; truly do I promise unto thee, (for) thou artdeartoMe.(ChXVIII-65)

ेषिाहंसमुद्धिोृतूयुसंसारसागरि्।
भवामि न मचरात्पाथा िय्यावेम शिचे सि् ॥

For them whose mind is set on Me,verilyIbecome ere longthe Saviour out of the ocean of the mortal Samsara(Ch. XII—7)

सवाधिान्ापररत्यज्यिोकं शरिंव्रज
अहंत्वा सवपा ापेभ् यो िोक्षमयष्यामि िा शुच ः ॥

Abandoning all duties, take refuge in Mealone;Iwillliberatethee from all sins; grieve not. (Ch. XVIII-66)
It is lamentable, indeed, that even afterreadingtheseassurances of Lord Krishna Himself, people do not take seriously to Yoga Sadhana.
May the blessings of Lord Krishna be upon youall.

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ETHICS OF
THE BHAGAVAD GITA

सवोपमनषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दनः।पाथो वत्सः सुधीभोक्ता दुगुधं ग्गिीृं िहि्॥

ॐ नमो भगवतेवासुदेवोय।

Introduction

THE CORNER-STONES OF THE GITA-ETHICS

Salutations to Lord Sri Krishna, the Sweetest Manifestation of the Supreme Being! Salutations to Srimad Bhagavad Gita, the Word of God! Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya.

What You Say Is the Expression of What You Are

Srimad Bhagavad Gita is the Gospel of Sri Krishna. Sri Krishna is regarded as the Purna-Avatara of God. He was perfect in every respect. God is All-pervading; Sri Krishna's life-on-earth, too, was all-comprehensive. Study Srimad Bhagavata and the Mahabharata. You will understand what a multi-faceted diamond Sri Krishna was. He was a wonderful child, divine boy, resplendent youth, dearest friend, mighty warrior, wise administrator, sweet comrade, master of diplomacy, protector of the meek, death of the wicked, preserver of Dharma, clever strategist, humble servant, obedient pupil, dutiful son, loving husband and Supreme Guru. These and countless others are but aspects of His Immanence as Krishna. Above all these, He is God Who, in His own transcendental nature, is the Lord of lords, the Father and Mother of all creation, the very Soul of all that exists. He is the Substratum of all existence. He is the Reality, immortal, eternal, infinite and absolute. He is not only immortal but Immortality Itself.

It is, therefore, in the fitness of things that the Scripture that He propounded should partake of all these great virtues that characterised His Divine Manifestation and His transcendental Nature. The Bhagavad Gita is so comprehensive that everyone can draw inspiration and guidance from it, whatever his social status may be, whatever his profession and in whatever stage of spiritual evolution he may be. For, into the Bhagavad Gita the Lord has woven a beautiful and universal pattern of ethics that would appeal and apply to all. The grand edifice of the Ethics of the Bhagavad Gita has been built on the Eternal Corner-stones of (1) Immortality

of the Soul; (2) Immanence of God; (3) Impermanence of the world; (4) Immediacy of liberation. Because these truths are universal, the Bhagavad Gita also have universal application.

Existing as He does as the very Immortal Principle in all beings, Lord Krishna proclaims with unimpeachable authority, the Immortality of the Soul. Being manifest here in this world as the very life and soul of all beings, He reveals the Immanence of God. Being the witness of the actions of Prakriti and the interplay of the Gunas, and in the perfect knowledge of the nature of this play of the Gunas, He declares that the objects of the world are evanescent, that all that is born must die, that all that is created must perish. Being the One who is conscious of the One Imperishable, Indivisible Truth which is never affected by the illusory play of Prakriti in which the Jiva which is essentially one with that Supreme Being dreams that he is dumb-driven and bound, the Lord asserts that Liberation is possible here and now.

The thundering revelation of the Immortality of the Soul in the Sloka: Ajo Nityah-sasvatoyam Purano Na Hanyate Hanyamane Sarire warns man not to deceive himself by trying to ignore the Law of Karma, the Law of Rebirth and the Law of Retribution. The soul within him does not die with the death of the body; and, so long as it does not liberate itself by attaining Jnana, is bound to reap the harvest of the seeds it has sown in this birth-Dhruvam Janma-MritasyaThe Jiva which imagines that it is the doer of an action is bound to it by an invisible thread called attachmentThe action is a rubber ball with a long rubber band attached to it which is given to the children to play with; one end of the band is tied to the finger of the child and he throws the ball on the ground; and the ball promptly rebounds to the child's hand. Similarly, every action performed by you with the idea that you are doing it, with a desire to attain a certain end, is bound to rebound on you sooner or later, in this birth or in another. Death itself is but going from one room to another; and so long as the band of attachment is not broken by the knife of non-attachment (Asanga Sastrena Dridhena Chhitva) and the knot of desire born of ignorance is not loosened; the ball of action is bound to come back. One who realises this will do no evil. It is ignorance of the immortality of the soul and the inevitable working of the law of action and reaction that makes the wicked man to go his evil way. The wise man dismisses the misfortunes that may befall him as the working out of the evil Karmas of a previous birth and is indifferent to them; and he is active in cultivating goodness and in doing good, convinced, in the words of Sri Krishna, "that the doer of good never comes by evil" and that in the life to come, he will not only be free from misery and misfortune, but will get greater opportunities of progressing more rapidly towards the goal, viz., Jnana. The doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul is, therefore, the most important corner-stone in the Gita-ethics.

The next is the revelation of the Immanence of God. God is not a cruel monarch or just a benevolent deity sitting on a golden throne in a far-away city depending for his knowledge of your actions on agents and spiesHe is the Indweller of everyone. He is the Witness of your thoughts. People around you watch your actions and hear your words; God watches not only your actions, but the motives that prompt them; He hears not only your words but the whisper of your heart's intentions. It is therefore that Lord Jesus, too, said: "Thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." The doctrine of the Immanence of God exposes, too, the hypocrite who pretends to worship God in a shrine, ignoring the Lord walking bare-bodied on

the road with a begging-bowl in hand, who is writhing in pain, groaning under subjection and groping in the darkness of ignorance - the disguises assumed by Him to test your sincerity and to give you a chance to worship Him truly, and to attain Him here and nowLook up, and see your Lord watching you through the eyes of everyone you meet. Have you got the sincerity to recognise Him? Then you are fit to realise God and your own Immortality. He is here, near you; and in order to bring this fact graphically before you, Sri Krishna describes Himself as the several manifestations set forth in the Vibhuti Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita.

The third-the doctrine of the impermanence of the world is a stern warning against your setting too much store by the things of this world. The greatest treasure you acquire is but straw! The least that you do to the Lord immanent in all around you is the key to inexhaustible treasureThe things that you acquire are of this world which will pass away; but by the service you render to God immanent here, you are watering the plant of Immortality Remember, the things that you possess, and the whole world; not only this world which is but a mere speck of dust in this universe, but the universe itself; not only this but countless universes that constitute creation are but objects of a passing dream of the Supreme BeingGrabbing them is like catching hold of a cobra mistaking it for a rope to tie round the waist as belt. Great is the misery of one who takes the world as reality and runs after the pleasures of the worldSupreme Bliss is the prize that awaits one who, understanding the evanescence of the world applies himself to Namasmarana, Japa, Kirtan, Selfless service, renunciation and meditation, in short, to the life divine.

To such a one liberation is promised here and now. One who, through knowledge of the Immortality of the Soul, the Immanence of God and the impermanence of the worldcasts off attachment to the world and the actions of Prakriti, attains Liberation here and now-Ihaiva Tairjitah sargo Yesham Samye Sthitam Manah, Nirdosham Hi Samam Brahma Tasmat Brahmani Te Sthitah. Not only that; the true devotee of the Lord attains Him quite easily: Tasyaham Sulabhah Partha Nityayuktasya Yoginah. This doctrine of the Immediacy of Liberation, This doctrine of hope is the great incentive to the diligent student of the Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita and is therefore, the fourth important corner-stone of the Ethics of the Bhagavad Gita

May the blessings of Lord Sri Krishna be upon you all! May you all attain Liberation from bondage here and now!

Chapter One

ETHICS: THE FRAGRANCE OF WISDOM

True, Lord Sri Krishna Killed many Asuras in a playful manner, even while He was a mere boy, and during His life on this earth had rid it of diabolical people. He took His birth here with the specific purpose, and He achieved it in a spectacular manner.

But, that was nothing compared to the transformation He had brought about in the heart of Man. The greatest enemy of Dharma has always been in the heart of Man. Dharma had to be rescued from the clutches of the demon of unrighteous heart.

No one who studies the Bala-Leelas of Lord Krishna would fail to be struck with wonder at the ingenuity of this Divine Child that He displayed in dealing with the Asuras. He was very clever, original and ingenious. Was He not God Himself! Even in the case of restoration of Dharma He displayed super-divine cleverness.

It is very easy to deal with the rank materialist, the man of openly vicious nature, the human brute; his unrighteousness is patent and it is easy to convince people of the need to keep away from him. Such vicious people are not as many as those who are extremely vicious at heart, whose conscience is enshrouded in ignorance, and through whose veins flows the deadly venom of selfishness, greed, lust, anger and egoism, but who knavishly presume an authority to teach people, to guide people along "the path of righteousness." Often, the devil quotes scriptures; and it is to the common man to detect the tiger masquerading in the garb of a cow, before it is too late to save himself. And yet these Asuric people who go about preaching "Dharma" to other people cause greater havoc than the outspokenly vicious persons; for, the former not only ruin themselves but ruin the lives of others also.

It is by the rescue of Dharma from the clutches of these misleaders of mankind that the Lord has truly fulfilled the self-imposed task of restoration of Dharma. Mercilessly He exposes these hypocrites by defining Jana in terms of ethics! He has given a completely revolutionary definition of Jana.

Amanitvamadambhitvamahimsa Kshantirarjavam, Acharyopasanam Saucham Sthairyamaatmavinigrahah.

Indriyartheshu Vairagyamanahamkara Eva Cha, Janmamrityujaravyadhi Duhkhadoshaanudarshanam.

Asaktiranabhishvangah Putradaragrihadishu, Nityam Cha Samachittatvamishtaanishtopapattishu.

Mayi Chaananyayogena Bhaktiravyabhicharini, Viviktadesasevitvamaratirjanasamsadi.

Adhyatmajnananityatvam Tattvajnanarthadarsanam, Etat Jnanamiti Proktamajnanam Yadatonyatha.

"Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forgiveness, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control; indifference to the objects of the senses, absence of egoism, perception of or reflection over the evil in birth, death, old age, sickness and pain, non-attachment, non-identification of Self with son, wife, home and the rest, constant even-mindedness on the attainment, of the desirable and the undesirable, unswerving devotion unto Me by the Yoga of non-separation, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men, constancy in Self-knowledge, perception of the end of true knowledge this is declared to be Knowledge and what is opposite to it is ignorance."

Study the Bhagavad Gita again and again. Repeatedly Krishna extols righteousness. The greatest Bhakta is not one who goes on rolling the beads, with selfishness, lust, anger and greed enshrined in his heart but one who is endowed with all auspicious qualities, and who is devoted to the welfare of humanity. So is a Sthitaprajna or a Gunatita. Lord Krishna does not define Jnana as scriptural erudition or an intellectual appreciation of philosophic truths or the capacity and cleverness to string words together and to indulge in vain debating. He defines Jana as the sum-total of the best of virtues! Read the thirteenth chapter of the Gita: you will understand clearly.

Now the hypocrites are exposed; and people are forewarned from being deceived by hypocrites. The Lord says: watch for these qualities in a man. If they are present, he is a Jnani, a saint; you can safely follow him and adopt him as your spiritual guide. If they are absent, avoid him, even though he may be an expert in the play of words and has learnt the whole of the Vedas and Sastras by heart.

For, if you find that a tree is full of mango-fruits, you need not dig up the earth to see if the tree has sprung up from mango-seed or from any other. "Know him by the fruits." If ignorance dwells in his heart, though the words appear to be words of wisdom, they are in fact the tentacles of the Adharma-octopus that dwells in the depths of his heart. How can a person pour out nectar from a jug that contains the deadliest poison? So, beware. All that glitters is not gold. Here is the touchstone of true wisdom ETHICS. Here is the easiest way of distinguishing the real flower from the paper-flower: fragrance! Ethics is the fragrance of wisdom.

Chapter Two

GITA-ETHICS: THE SUBTLE MIDDLE-PATH

Yuktahara Viharasya Yukta Cheshtasya Karmasu, Yukta-Svapnaavabodhasya Yogo Bhavati Duhkhahaa.

This Sloka sums up the Gita-ethics very nicely. The foolish extremes should be avoided; for they lead to the destination that is diametrically opposite to your goal. This is a simple but subtle truth which can be understood only by the diligent student of the Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita. To cite a simple in-stance, the man practising humility will go to the extreme of developing a pride in his own humility! The feeling that "I am humble" is as dangerous an obstacle as (if not more so than) the feeling "I am a powerful emperor"; the pride of erudition in the Sastras is as great an evil as pride in the knowledge of mundane sciences; and the man who rightly resolves to study the scriptures for his own enlightenment almost without his own knowledge slips into the extreme of intellectual dyspepsia which results in non-assimilation of the essence and vomiting of undigested material!

Neither misuse nor disuse, but proper use is the Gita-Yoga. In fact, the very word YOGA signifies this. It is the conjunction of two, the union of two, the point at which the two opposites meet; it is a confluence which is neither this nor that, where this meets that and the two beautifully blend into one.

The Lord has merely cited the two examples of eating and sleeping and has commanded you not to go to the extremes of fasting or indulgence, wakefulness or sloth. But the principle should be applied to all the activities of man, to the entire life itself. This is the central teaching of the Bhagavad Gita.

In fact, the very opening chapter of the Gita teaches this.

Duryodhana shook with fear because he betrayed ignorance of Dharma (he had learned the Sastras, but had not known how to apply them to the situations that arise in life); Arjuna was haunted by an ill-digested knowledge of the Sastras. Lord Sri Krishna teaches him the secrets of Dharma of which He Himself says: "What to do and what not to do is a problem that often puzzles the wisest among men; therefore I am telling you the Truth about Karma, a knowledge of which will free you from all sin." Granite-hearted cruelty and bestiality (which Duryodhana represented and misplaced sympathy or extreme chicken-heartedness which is nothing but weakness are both enemies of Dharma. Following the Middle path of Wisdom, as described in Mamanusmara Yudhya cha (meditate upon Me and do thy duty -Gita), Chitte kripa Samara-Nishthurata cha Drishtaa (in You, Mother, Compassion of the Heart and ruthless destruction of evil are seen to dwell together- -Devi Mahatmya).

The technique of this right action is not easy to understand. The condition pre-requisite to the performance of action in the right spirit is complete annihilation of egoism. Egoism cuts both

ways! Neither action, nor inaction, based on egoism, is right. "The deluded soul thinks he is the doer of an action, blinded by egoism" and "if you in the wrong belief that you are the doer, desist from action, you will fail" both these declarations of the Lord clearly point to the Middle Path of Egoless Action. "Why do you imagine that you are fighting? Become an Instrument in My Hands! Nimitta-Matram Bhava," says the Lord. In fact, the entire universe is maintained by His Will and Power alone; /svarassarvabhutaanam Hriddeserjuna Tishthati;
Bhramayan Sarvabhutani Yantrarudhani Mayayaa. (The Lord is seated in the hearts of all beings; and He carries on the activities of the world, making all beings, through the power of His Maya, dance to His Tune).
How can man conquer this Maya? On both sides of the Lord there is Maya. You would have seen this in most temples of the Lord: in the centre is the Lord, on both His sides there is Mother--variously styled as Rukmini and Satyabhama, Valli and Devasena, etc. Look at Him! Does He not tell you: "Rivet your eyes upon me who am in the Middle; on both My sides there is Maya!" Therefore, He says: "This Divine Power of Mine, Maya, is hard to transcend; only those who resolutely stick to My Feet can do so." Look, neither to the left nor to the right, but look up into His Radiant Face; you will attain Moksha, here and now.

Prakasham cha Pravrittim cha Mohameva cha Pandava
Na Dveshthi Sampravrittani Na Nivrittani Kankshati.

This Sloka beautifully sums up the philosophy of the Middle Path. The sage standing on the firm rock of Self-knowledge calmly lets the three currents of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas flow by, without courting one or running away from the other, knowing that they belong to a realm where he might appear to be, but to which in truth he does not belong. He knows that in the All-pervading Light of Satchidananda (that alone IS), the Jiva is a spark that flits about, changing apparent shapes, changing places and changing directions now moving upward, now going forward and now diving downwards but all the time in that Light of which it is an integral part and with which it soon becomes one.
This understanding cautions you to avoid the twin-error of depending entirely upon self-effort or upon Divine Grace. The universe is maintained by Divine Grace just as the Spark which is but part of the Flame flits about only within the Flame controlled by its currents- but the individual's self-effort is an integral part of the Divine Grace. Even in this extremely vital factor in Sadhana, one should avoid the extremes. Therefore, the Lord declares: "one is one's own enemy; and one is one's own greatest benefactor. You will have to raise yourself by your own self." And at another place he says: "| give him Buddhi-Yoga, by which he attains to Me;" and "Renounce all Dharmas and surrender to Me; I will liberate you." The insistence on self-effort is to prevent the Sadhaka from insincere and fruitless surrender; and the call to surrender is to curb his conceit. Wisdom lies in adhering to the Middle Path of intelligent self-effort based on a thorough understanding of the truth that it is His Power and Grace that works and the Sadhaka is only an instrument-Nimitta.
The secret of this Nimitta-Bhavana is non-attachment. It is on account of this that the Gita-Yoga is often termed as Anasakti-Yoga. Repeatedly the Lord asks you to work without attachment to the work itself (which results from identifying yourself with the doer of the act) or to the fruits (which result in your taking a birth again in order to enjoy them). This Anasakti is not an inter

dissociation with the affairs of the world; nor is it the life of a living and breathing corpse. It is dynamic detachment! It is to bring out this truth that the Lord explains that in external appearance the actions of a Jnani and those of a Samsari might seem to be the same; but the Samsari performs the actions bound to them by the bonds of attachment, whilst the Jnani does his work completely detached. The underlying secret is this: attachment and detachment belong to the plane of intelligence and are not to be mistaken for gross external behaviour.

The plane of gross physical activity is the plane of matter; and all matter is governed by material laws. That is why the Lord declares: Sadrisham Cheshtate Svasyaah Prakriter-Jnanavanapi; Prakritim Yanti Bhutani Nigrahah Kim Karishyati. Only the ignorant people will argue why the sage eats, breathes or sleeps, and why his body is subject to diseases and old age. Should a sage walk on his head? Should he eat stones and mud in order to convince you that he is a sage? Then, what is the difference between a mesmerist, a charlatan and Sage of Self-realisation? No. The sage's body belongs to Nature and is composed of the elements. The most important difference between you and a sage is this you are attached to your body; the sage is not -he treats it as his instrument in order to fulfil the Lord's Will here and, as he understands that the instrument is subject to the Laws of Nature, he is not troubled by the different conditions it passes through. Here, again, is a doctrine which the evil-minded man might use to cover his sense-hankering. Therefore, the Lord, while describing the state of the Sthitha-Prajna, asserts that his senses are completely restrained. There is great truth hidden here. Senses must be controlled completely; but use your intelligence and commonsense in this respect. Do not jump to the extreme of trying to go against Nature. Do not think that "control of the tongue" means starvation, and "control over sleep" is complete sleeplessness. Do not think you can conquer heat and cold by standing on burning sand at midday sammed, and in ice-cold water at midnight in winter. These misguided practices are characterised by the Lord as actions that torture "Him Who dwells in the body." What is needed is an intelligent understanding of your nature, body, your mind and craving that lurk in it. By intelligent methods of self-denial you should strive to acquire control over your mind and thus to wipe out the desires and cravings in the mind. Sense-control is an inward process; and, though physical abstinence from sense-objects helps, it is restraint of the inner senses that is important. This is possible; for it is above and beyond the realm of matter and with the help of a pure Buddhi through which the Light of the Self shines, one can easily restrain the senses. (Ch. III. 42-43). But all the time the aspirant should tread the subtle middle-path which is neither forced restraint nor indulgence.

In all this endeavour the aspirant is sustained by hope and goaded by the "rarity of achievement." The Lord gives you the Staff of Hope when he declares: "Even a little of the practice of this Dharma saves you from great fear. No effort goes in vain." "Never does the man who does good come to grief." If not in this, in your next birth, you will attain Moksha! "Even if the wicked among men rightly resolves, he is truly to be considered a Sadhu; he will soon attain Me." Hopes, hopes and hopes the Lord showers on you with all His Hands. But He will not let you yield to complacency! He will not let you slip into inertia. That is why He says: "One in a million strives to reach Me; and among those who so strive, one in a million realises Me." "After several births of perfect living, one realises Everything is God; and he is a rare being." Thus, here, too, He would not allow you to succumb to complacency or to despondency; hopeful, yet realising the magnitude of the task, He commands you to march boldy forward and reach the goal here and now!

Thus in your basic philosophic concept, in your understanding of nature, in your Sadhana, in your dealings with the external world in everything- the Lord exhorts you to tread the subtle middle path that leads straight to God. May you all attain God-realisation here and now!

Chapter Three

MAN AND GOD

Find out what a man's conception of God is and what, according to him is his relation to that God: you will understand his nature, his character and characteristics. If money be his God, greed will be his nature and grabbing his characteristic. If Power be his God, egoistic will be his nature and arrogance his characteristic. If pleasure be his God, lust will be his nature and sensuousness his characteristic. They will have much in common, too. Truth will be conspicuous by its absence, and anger by its presence. Compassion has not come into their heart which is filled only with passion.

On the other hand, they who worship and adore the Supreme Truth as their God, will be the abode of virtues, the embodiments of Truth, Love and Purity, the exemplars of Compassion, the living images of Peace, Humility, Unity and Divinity.

There is only One Supreme Power in this Universe, Who listens to man's prayers and grants the fruits of his actions.

That Power is not only impartial but is of the nature of Supreme Love for all beings. That Power is God. All the aspirations of man reach Him. Ignorant, foolish man has no idea what he is asking for. In the darkness of ignorance, he mistakes a cobra for a neck-tie and wants to wear it; he mistakes a python for a log of wood and goes forth to sit on it; he mistakes a whale for an island and longs to spend the night sitting on it and gazing at the moon. God helps them in mysterious ways, even if it need be by granting them some of the objects they long for, so that soon they understand the real nature of all the objects of the world. The millionaire realises that happiness is decreased when wealth increases. The powerful monarch is in his heart of hearts ready to exchange his crown for a millionth of the peace that a Sanyasin enjoys. The sensuous man discovers that What he longed for were not objects of enjoyment, but messengers of death, disease and old age. Then they too, return to the path of Divine Life and realise that it was He the Supreme Being Who granted them their desires (Gita: VII-22) and that if instead of running after these perishable objects he devoted himself to the constant remembrance of the Lord. He the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of everything will create peace and happiness in him, preserve him, preserve his joy and contentment, and destroy his grief and sorrow.

The moment man turns his gaze within and understands

God as He is in Truth, as the One Self that pervades everything, as One Common Link in all beings (Mayaa Tatamidam Sarvam), at that very moment he will become the embodiment of all the divine virtues that have been stressed again and again in the Gita.

Isvarah Sarvabhutanam Hriddeserjuna Tishthati, Bhramayan Sarvabhutani Yantrarudhani Mayayaa.

God dwells in your heart. He dwells in the hearts of all beings. Think of it for a moment. How would you behave if you realised this? You would at once understand that it is useless to deceive yourself or others. You would know that this Supreme Lie Detector lying hidden in your own heart knows even your thoughts! He knows the falsehood before it is uttered. He has recorded the evil action before it proceeds through your limbs. He is very much unlike the Judges and Magistrates of this world. If He adopts their Codes, then there would be no end to the punishments that He could award on you, for the countless evil thoughts that arise in you and of which He and He alone is the most reliable witness. But God is all-love and forgiveness. Even if at times, He seems to punish a Jiva, it is only for the latter's ultimate everlasting good. " take away the wealth and worldly prosperity of the man I wish to bless and lead to My Lotus-feet," said Lord Krishna.
Thus, a strict control of thoughts become the nature of the man who conceives of God as the All-Pervading Self. As speech and actions are but the handmaids of thought, in the case of such a great soul, the speech would be truthful, pleasant and beneficial; and actions pure, holy and divine. Such a man would effortlessly be practising the three kinds of austerities that the Lord has prescribed in the Gita:

Deva-Dvija-Guru-Prajna-Pujanam Saucham-Arjavam, Brahmacharyam-Ahimsa cha Saareeram Tapa Uchyate.

"Worship of the Gods, the twice-born, the teachers and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, celibacy and non-injury are called the austerity of the body.

**Anudvegakaram Vakyam Satyam Priyahitam cha yat,
Svadhyayabhyasanam chaiva Vaangmayam Tapa Uchyate.**

"Speech which causes no excitement, truthful, pleasant and beneficial, the practice of the study of the scriptures are called the austerity of speech."

Manah Prasadah Saumyatvam Mounam Atma-vinigrahah, Bhavasamshuddhirityetat Tapo Manasam Uchyate.

"Serenity of mind, good-heartedness, silence, self-con-trol, purity of Bhava (attitude, motive) - this is called the mental austerity.
This man is God-on-earth, fit to be worshipped. He is a living exemplar of the ethics of the Bhagavad Gita. His opposite we shall consider next.

Chapter Four

THE GODLESS MAN

The man who sees God in all beings is God-man; the man who denies the very existence of God is a Godless man! It is very difficult often to recognise the God-man because by nature he is extremely humble, simple and unostentatious. Nor is it always easy to detect, the Godless man for he will masquerade in many garbs. That is why the Lord has extensively quoted the very words that these people would often use in their conversations. Watch for these expressions of the diabolical nature. Whatever the man appears to be, if these expressions come out of him, he is a Godless man, shun him, for his company is more fatal than the poison of a cobra.

"I have gained this today," he would say, "I shall fulfil my other desire also." What a deluded idea he has of the Power behind his senses, mind and the limbs! Yet, God is all-merciful and allows him to feel that he is powerful enough to fulfil his desires. "All this wealth is mine," he says, "I shall get more in future." It is not as though God, the Dispenser of the fruits of previous actions, has granted him material prosperity; he feels that he has acquired the wealth by his own striving! And, of course, he can acquire more by exerting a little more. "That enemy of mine has been slain by me; others, too, I shall destroy." Such ideas will not rise in the mind of even an ordinary Sadhaka. Now comes the crowning feature. The diabolical, Godless man says: "I am the Lord (Isvara); I am the real enjoyer; I am perfect, powerful and happy." it is well to mark these expressions and meditate over them. Is it not true that the individual soul is in fact the Lord of the Universe, perfect, powerful and blissful? Yes. Then, why does the Lord include these expressions, too, in the devil's dictionary? There is great reason for it. The Sage might realise that he is one with the Lord, that he is perfect, omnipotent and blissful. But he will not advertise it. Because he will see that self-same Atman in all, he will not find in the world anything to which he is superior, anything less perfect, powerful and blissful, than himself. Therefore, he will not boast; he will be the very embodiment of natural humility. He who boasts has no justification to do so. Even though he might pose to be a Godless man, Asuric in nature. Of course this expression of the Lord also includes Asuras like Hiranyakasipu and men of Asuric nature.

Equally interesting are the next few sentences quoted by the Lord. "I am rich and am born in a good family. Who is equal to me? I will perform sacrifices. I will give in charity. And, I will rejoice." This is petty egoism and Tamasic Yajna and Dana. No one but the Asuric element in man is benefited by these.

How compassionate is the Lord that he has given us in the clearest terms the very expression that the Asuric individual would use. Find out if you use them. You may even say that you are a staunch theist and devotee of the Lord. But if, at the same time, these expressions escape your lips, your devotion is hypocritical and useless. You may pose to be a great Yogi or saint; but if

you share the feelings of the Asuric person which the Lord has described in Chapter XVI 13-15 which I have quoted above, you are cheating yourself and cheating the world.

The worst part of it is that even these Asuric people have their own philosophy. For this purpose we can divide them into two categories: the rank atheist and the pseudo-theist. The rank atheist says: "What is the need for believing in an invisible and non-material God? The universe was not created by God, but it is the product of the conglomeration of atoms. There is no God." The pseudo-theist, on the other hand says: "I am Isvara; all-powerful, perfect and blissful," There is not much difference between the two. They appeal to two sections of mankind. The former appeals to the worldly worm of a human being who revels in the filth of sensual pleasures. The latter gathers around himself the deluded hypocrites who pose to be Sadhakas; they, too, love a life of ease and comfort, with a little name, fame and perhaps psychic powers, too. The words and actions of the people belonging to both these categories will be identical: for, whereas the atheist feels that there is no God and, therefore,he is all powerful, the pseudo-theist feels that he himself is God and is, therefore, all-powerful, etc.

Once faith in a transcendental Power, God, the Witness of all hearts, the Great Indwelling Presence, is lost, how will man behave? What he does and does not do depends upon his fancy and not upon any code of righteous conduct (Dharma). Purity, truthfulness and such other divine qualities will be absent in him. Selfishness vibrating in every cell of his being, he will be a man of terrible deeds; he would do anything to fulfil his desires. He cares not for his neighbour's good, but only for his own advantage under any circumstances. His resolves would be impure. He will have no end of desires. He will be full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance. Living to eat, and eating to lust, he has no higher ambition than the satisfaction of his carnal desires which multiply with fulfilment.

The very atmosphere around such a man is hell. Sometimes even he is seen to perform pious acts like Yajna, charity, etc. The supreme Yajna is Jnana-Yajna, the gift of the highest kind of knowledge of the Self. The Yajna that the selfish, Asuric man performs is the worst kind of Yajna the Lord gives a very apt and amusing name for it "Nama-Yajna", the act performed with the sole object of earning name and fame.

In order to teach them a lesson, the Lord gives such Asuric people, birth in the lower order of creation. The force of Asuric Vasanas drags them lower and lower still, till they reach the lowest rung in the ladder of evolution, from there to start their journey once more.

Oh man, beware, beware, beware. Watch every one of your thoughts, words and deeds. Analyse and find out for yourself if what you think, say, feel and do, comes within the definition of Asuric nature given by the Lord. If it does, at once mend yourself. You will soon become divine and reach the Lord here and now.

Chapter Five

GOD IN MAN

Yad-Yad-Vibhutimat-Sattvam Srimad-Urjitameva Va, Tat-Tadeva-Avagacha Tam Mama Tejomsa-sambhavam.

The greatest achievement that is aimed at by the ethics of the Bhagavad Gita is to be established in God-consciousness, to realise that the Self that dwells in man is God, and to partake of His Divine Life, Light, Bliss and Consciousness.
What are the characteristics of the person who has achieved this aim? Knowing them, you will be able to draw closer to the ideal.
That into which the Lord's Light descends becomes a glorious manifestation of His Divinity, prosperous and full of Sri, powerful and certain.
A closer study of the great Vibhuti-Yoga-Adhyaya of the Gita clarifies this still further. What are the Vibhutis of the Lord that we ought to take cognisance of in this connection?
"Buddhi, Jana, absence of Moha, forgiveness, truthfulness, self-restraint, calmness, happiness, (and pain), existence and non-existence, fear and fearlessness, Ahimsa, equanimity, contentment, austerity, beneficence, fame and ill-fame are all qualities that spring from Me," says the Lord. A few of the pairs of opposites are included here to emphasise that the saintly person would preserve the evenness of his mind in the midst of all these. All these qualities are the Vibhutis of the Lord and would be found in the God-man. These are the qualities that the Lord extols again and again in the Bhagavad Gita. From different standpoints, in accordance with the path that the Sadhaka had chosen, the God-man- the Sadhaka who has obtained Divine Grace and into whom the Divine Light had descended - is called a Sthitaprajna, Gunatita, Para Bhakta, Yogi etc. But the characteristics of all these are the same; and the Lord untiringly repeats the divine qualities that characterise them all. For, the qualities are but His Vibhutis.
"Sri" is not only prosperity, not only wealth and abundance in the way the man-in-the-street takes it to mean; it means all the Daivi Sampat that the Lord mentions in the Sixteenth Chapter of the Gita. These are so very important that they would bear any amount of repetition; engrave those qualities on the tablet of your heart, meditate on them, cultivate them zealously and practise them till you become perfect in them. What are they? "Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in knowledge and Yoga, alms-giving, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the Sastras, austerity and straightforwardness, Ahimsa, truthfulness, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to beings, non-covetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride- these belong to the one born for a divine state.' All these qualities should be rooted in firm conviction, unshakable faith, doubtless certainty. That is what is hinted in the word "Uritam.

That then, is the nature of the God-in-man. Man is nothing but the Spark of the Divine Fire of Godhead. True. But just as the fire is covered by smoke even so this Knowledge is (or appears to be) covered by the wind of the Ethics of the Bhagavad Gita, the Spark of Divinity shines as the blazing Fire of Self-realisation.

Chapter Six

GATEWAY TO GRIEF

The Lord does not mince words. In clear-cut and categorical terms, He says: "Do this" and "Do not do this." He has no need for logic and arguments; He is the Truth Himself. He seeks not your praise and applause: He does not even bother to convince you and compel you to obey Him. At the end of the Gita, He says to Arjuna: "I have told you the bases of Truth; think over and do what you will." You are His Child. He does not want that you should be a slave to anyone. He wants you to exercise your birthright, freedom or independence. He guides you; He points out the way. He declares in unequivocal terms: "This is what you should do." One cannot argue on fundamentals; no one can completely convince another by argument. Logic leaves you at a stage; beyond that is the realm of the Divine. There the intellect has no admission; only the heart, faith, can enter. If you have faith in the Divine Admonitions of the Lord you will enjoy the glorious reward of Eternal Bliss and Perennial Peace. If you have no faith (and this happens only in the case of Asuric beings who deny the very existence of God), then endless suffering, misery and grief will in due course disillusion you and awaken you to the truth. If faith is the key to the mansion of Peace and Bliss, faithlessness or disbelief is also a key, but it can open only the gateway to grief. In order to enable you to carefully avoid this path of the wicked, the Lord gives absolutely clear indications of the nature of this path. The gateway to this path is made up of the brick of anger and mortar of greed and is plastered with the cement of desire. In attractive colours and alluring form a sign post stands at this gate to say that it is the gateway to hell; but the man entering it post-haste is charmed by the glittering colours of the sign-post and has no time to study what is written on it. As he enters the gate, he looks forward and he notices that the road is paved with nothing but 'I' 'I' 'I'. The fruitless trees on both sides shoot up into the sky, each one, one long 'I', never bending, never bearing any fruits. He looks back and sees that the road that led to him was also paved with this alone. With great delight, he discovers that the staff he holds in his hand is also another 'I'. "I am marching: and I will march forward" -this thought arises in him; and he has not the faintest idea of a power superior to himself.

As he walks along, he meets several others walking the same path. There are some broad characteristics in all of them. They are confirmed liars. They are unclean in their body, mind and heart; and they defile their surroundings and pollute the very atmosphere in which they live. They, too, hold philosophic discussions: but they always come to the definite conclusion that there is no God, no rebirth, no soul, and therefore no need to lead a life of truth, purity, love and austerity; they proclaim: "Eat, drink and be merry." They preach the gospel of hatred; they practise their own tenet of violence and destruction, not quite realising that thereby they destroy themselves. Their overweening pride gives birth to vanity, arrogance, hot-headed insolence, and a host of other vices. In their heart is insatiable desire enthroned. In one of their eyes resides lust; and in the other anger.

The traveller on this path acquires whatever vices he lacked, through association with fellow travellers. His heart is filled with ideas like: "I have got this now" "I will get the other thing also" "I have disposed of this enemy of mine" "I will kill the others also." As he goes along, he feels "I am the Lord of everything" "I am perfect" "I am very strong and powerful" "Who is equal to me?" The cloud of egoism surrounds them on all' sides; they are blinded by delusion. They fall into the bottomless pit of
hell.

no Saints and God-men, full of love and compassion for all beings, intervene and try to save these people also from their own evil. But the wicked man's egoism prevents him from grasping the Saving Hand. His lust and anger drag him away from his saviour. And, what is more, as he is by nature vicious, he hates the saints, he hates the Bhaktas of the Lord, and he abhors the very idea of God; in short, he refuses to be saved from the doom that he has invited by his continuous misconduct.

Such is the nature of the vicious man. Therefore, beware! Do not enter the gateway to grief. Avoid it from a very distance. Do not even go near to examine it: for such is the power of Maya; such is the power of delusion, that you might lose yourself in admiring the false glitter, nibble at the bait and perish.

How compassionate is the Lord! He has beautifully portrayed the wicked man's actions, his attitude to life, his philosophy and the very words that would come out of his lips: who can explain it more clearly? He has done so because it is of the utmost importance that one who would like to enjoy Eternal Bliss and Perennial Peace should scrupulously avoid these vicious qualities.

Mere avoidance of evil will not take you very far. Moreover, the easiest way of overcoming evil--which has only a negative force is to cultivate its opposite virtue. To help you grow in virtue and divinity, the Lord has throughout the Bhagavad Gita enumerated the various divine qualities you should cultivate. We shall deal with them in subsequent instalments.

Chapter Seven

THE NEW TESTAMENT OF RENUNCIATION

In the Bhagavad Gita it is that we find the most beautiful synthesis of man's duty towards himself and towards humanity– a synthesis of renunciation, and Yoga of service. For attaining Self-Knowledge, it was universally acknowledged that one should "renounce" the world; for serving humanity, on the other hand, one should not only be in the world but take an active part in its affairs. But, how to practise all these together?
Luckily for us, Arjuna pointedly asks for clarification of this very doubt:

Sannyasam Karmanam Krishna Punar Yogam cha Samsasi, Yat Sreya Etayorekam Tan-me Bruhi Sunischitam.

"Renunciation of actions, O Krishna, thou praisest; and again Yoga. Tell me conclusively that which is the better of the two."
Lord Krishna quickly dismisses the very idea of Karma-Sannyasa-mere renunciation of action. For, He has already declared that "no being here can ever remain inactive even for a second in this world" and "even the maintenance of the body is not possible without the performance of some action or other." He had condemned as hypocrisy the inaction of the lustful who sit dreaming of the objects of enjoyment while, on the false pretence of renunciation, they physically refrain from contact with those objects. Lord Sri Krishna further declares that renunciation born of a fear of pain or of the difficulties with which one is faced, is no renunciation at all. Yajna, or self-sacrificing service, Dana or charity and Tapas or austerity should not be renounced. Sahajam Karma one's natural duty- should not be renounced. Then what is renunciation? Who is a Sannyasi?
"He should be known as a perpetual Sanyasi who neither hates nor desires, for, free from the pairs of opposites, he is easily set free from bondage." says the Lord. Desire is to be renounced; hatred is to be ruthlessly abandoned. In other words, Raga-Dvesha is to be renounced.
This renunciation is not possible for one who is not a true Yogi. He should have realised the Inner Self that is distinct from the five sheaths -Annamaya (physical, gross body), Pranamaya (vital sheath), Manomaya (mind), Vijnanamaya (in-tellect) and Anandamaya (causal body). Realising this he will want nothing; he will desire for no object of enjoyment. A knowledge of this Self is that obtaining which the man seeks for nothing else and established in which he is unshaken by the greatest calamity. And, he should have realised that the same Self dwells in all beings. Then will hatred take permanent leave of him. Whom will he hate or be afraid of when the whole universe is pervaded by his own Self? Therefore it is that the Lord emphatically declares that Yoga and Sannyasa are identical.
The secret of this renunciation Lord Sri Krishna has set beautifully forth in the two Slokas:

Naiva kinchit karomeeti Yukto Manyeta Tatvavit, Pasyan-srinvan-sprisan-jighran-asnan-gachchan-
svapan-svasan.

Pralapan-visrijan-grihnan-unmishan-nimishannapi, Indriyaneendriyartheshuvartanta iti dhaarayan.

"Ido nothing at all" thus would the harmonised knower of truth think; seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking, letting go, seizing, opening and closing the eyes convinced that the senses move among the sense-objects. This is true renunciation. The Yogi-Sannyasi does not delight in the enjoyment of sense-objects:

Ye hi Samsparsajaa Bhogah Duhkha-yonaya Eva Te, Adyantavantah Kaunteya Na Teshu Ramate Budha.

"The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only generators of pain, for they have a beginning and an end, O son of Kunti, and the wise do not rejoice in them."
From this it follows that the Yogi-Sannyasi will be
Vivikta-sevi Laghvashi Yata-vakkayamanasah Dhyana-Yoga-paro Nityam Vairagyam Samupasritah--fond of solitude, eating a little food just to keep body and soul together; with his thought, speech and action well under his control, de. voled to the Yoga of meditation and endowed with burning dispassion.
The Sannyasi will not be fond of the company of people.
He will neither eat much nor fast much; neither sleep much nor keep much awake. He will seek the Golden Mean in all things. He will neither indulge the senses nor practise Asuric austerities, torturing the body and the Indweller, God.
Even the kind of Tapas that he incessantly practises, proclaims this New Testament of Renunciation--absence of love and hatred. He practises a comprehensive Tapas in which intelligent control of his thought, word and deed is the main feature. The "bodily Tapas" consists in the worship of God, Brahmanas, the spiritual preceptor and the learned; in cleanliness; straightforwardness in all actions; the practice of celibacy and harmlessness. The Tapas of speech comprises of: the speaking of words that do not excite anyone, truthful, loving and beneficial, the study of scriptures and recitation of Mantras. The mental Tapas denotes: cheerfulness of mind, goodness, practice of silence, inner self-control and purity of motives.
Again and again, Lord Sri Krishna emphasises that the Yogi is one of even-mind, not given to emotional turmoil, who has risen beyond the pairs of opposites and is, therefore, not affected by them. He will behave with uniform courtesy and love towards his friends and enemies and will not entertain any thought of hatred towards anyone. He will treat a lump of clay and a nugget of gold with equal indifference thus eradicating desire from the heart. Then is he a Yogi or a Sanyasi.
This even-mindedness is based upon the realisation of the all-pervading Presence of the Self: he will perceive all beings in the Self and the Self in all beings. Realising this he will constantly serve all beings and will be devoted to the welfare of all beings-Sarvabhuta-Hite-Rataah.

Chapter Eight

GURU AND DISCIPLE

The Bhagavad Gita itself exemplifies the relationship of a true Guru and Ideal Disciple. Besides telling Arjuna that the spiritual preceptor is Tattva-Darshi, the Seer of Truth, who will impart the Knowledge of the Reality to a disciple who approaches him in the right spirit, Lord Krishna says very little about the role of the Guru. The reason is obvious. There He stood in the chariot as the exemplar of the perfect Guru. His actions were scriptures.

Did not Lord Sri Krishna know that Arjuna would behave as he did and that He would have to teach him the Gita Sastra? Yes: The Lord was omniscient. What was the role He took upon Himself? The role of Arjuna's charioteer. That is the first and foremost lesson for a Guru. He should regard himself as the disciple's servant! He should win the disciple's confidence and capture his heart. He should become the best friend of the disciple, and await the best chance to impart the supreme wisdom to the disciple.

Lord Krishna did this; and in days of yore, sage Jada Bharata also adopted this method.

When the time comes to teach the disciple, the Preceptor should proceed carefully to enlighten him without ever violently unsettling his beliefs. The Guru must come down to the level of disciple and lead him from there. How many wonderful psychological methods the Lord uses to persuade Arjuna to stand up and fight! At one moment He speaks high philosophy, and the very next moment, He dwells upon Arjuna's worldly prosperity and attainment of heaven! Again and again, He hammers the central theme: "Yudhyasva" "Fight! Using various arguments, He actually persuades Arjuna to fight. This is the way to win the confidence of the disciple; this is the way to honour the self-respect of the disciple and enable him to have self-confidence.

Krishna could well have just commanded Arjuna to get up and fight, without arguing with him at all. But, no: the true preceptor would not do so. He would never enslave the disciple. He would inspire the latter to think for himself, to understand his duty aright and then....

"Do as you like" says the Lord at the conclusion of the Gita-discourse. Remember, the disciple's individuality is not to be crushed but his inner personality is to be awakened and vivified.

Patience and forbearance, love and consideration, mark the ideal Guru. Let us now turn to the Gita-ideal of a disciple.

So long as a person feels that he is superior in intelligence to the sage whom he approaches, he is not a disciple! It is when the seeker has analysed himself and discovered that he by himself, could not decide what is right and what is wrong, that he falls at the feet of the Master, to throw light on his (disciple's) path. It is then that he is fit to be taught. Till then the preceptor will have to wait.

The disciple, what does he ask of the preceptor? Not the way to win a war, nor to attain worldly prosperity or name and fame. "Yat-Sreyassyannischitam-Bruhi Tan-me": again and again Arjuna asks Lord to show him the path of Sreyas. Sreyas and not Preyas is prayed for. The

disciple asks the Master to show him the Path of Good not the path of pleasant. This is the foremost qualification of a seeker-disciple.
Then, the Lord has beautifully described the three-fold function of the disciple in the famous Sloka:

Tad-Viddhi Pranipatena Pariprasnena Sevaya, Upadekshyanti Te Jnanam Janinah Tattvadarshinah.

Prostration (symbolising self-surrender), eager and humble questioning and service these are the three qualifications of a disciple that would draw the Guru's Grace which will dispel the darkness of ignorance from the heart of the seeker. If he is in doubt, he must seek clarification from the Master: he is not to decide the issue himself, lest he should like Virochana misunderstand the Master's teaching and run along the wrong way. Arjuna questions the Lord again and again, whenever he is in doubt: but never does he lose sight of his goal--he asks for Sreyas. Guru-Seva is of paramount importance for the purification of the heart of the disciple, to enable the Light of Self-Knowledge to descend into it. Should he experience any difficulty in the process of Sadhana taught by the Master, the disciple should not hesitate to approach the Master and place his difficulties before him. A wonderful example of this is given to us in the Gita when the Lord describes the Dhyana Yoga. Arjuna feels that it would be as difficult to subdue the mind as to restrain the wind: and unhesitatingly places his difficulty before the Lord, which elicits from Him the supreme commandment that "The mind can be controlled only by Abhyasa and Vairagya." Incidentally, the Gita-ideal of Guru will not pooh-pooh the disciple's difficulties, but will sympathise with the disciple and suggest suitable ways and means of overcoming them. "Acharyopasanam" is the foremost duty of the disciple. Service of the Preceptor, actual worship of the Guru, is the disciple's duty and privilege. Guru is the visible representative of God. This itself is beautifully alluded to in the Bhagavad Gita when the Lord at one place says: "Dadami Buddhi Yogam I give him the Yoga of the Intelligence" and at another "Upadekshyanti Te Jnanam- -They (the Knowers of Truth) will impart the Knowledge of Truth to you." The Teacher should, therefore, be literally worshipped as God-on-earth. When all is said and done, if the disciple serves the Guru and listens to his Upadesa, but does not act up to it, it would be of little use to him. Like Arjuna, he must at once act upon the Master's instructions: Karishye Vachanam Tava- I shall act up to your instruction this ought to be the disciple's attitude to the Master.

Chapter Nine

THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF RIGHT THINKING

It was elevated to one of the eightfold principal principles by Lord Buddha. Krishna the Supreme Psychologist, recognised and enunciated this principle in the Gita. Thought is the mother of speech and deed. Mighty deeds strike awe in us. The discerning know that speech precedes and has the roots of this deed. It is only the wise who know that thought is at the very bottom of all this.

Therefore, Lord Jesus emphasised that true sin was committed by the mind, and asked man to beware of the secret sin committed in the inner chambers of one's heart. Lord Krishna calls him a hypocrite who, to all outward appearance is saintly and self-controlled but is inwardly contemplating upon the objects of senses. The sincere aspirant has no use for such hypocrisy. He will strive to let his thoughts be as pure and holy as he strives to make his words and deeds appear.

The moment an object is thought of, the real contact is established. The mischief is afoot now. The mind endowed naturally with a tendency to flow out seeking to find happiness in the objects, now finds the best opportunity-a channel to flow into. The mind is saturated with the form of the object thought of and desires for it.

This is very much like the contact of a spark of flame with a hay-stack. The hay which was all good, food for beings, is at once transformed into all-consuming fire. The hay-stack burns and burns all that lies adjacent to it. It razes to the earth the very house in which it is stored. Often the owner of the house himself is brought to ruin, if not actually killed.

Similar is the case with mind, the good friend of man. It is the mind, unpolluted by desires, that serves to nourish his soul with pure thoughts, sublime emotions and calm meditation. When the spark of a thought of sense-object enters this mind, it is at once aflame with desire for it. The fire spreads, giving rise to other minor and major fires. If the desire is thwarted, anger arises. If the desire is fulfilled, fear (of losing the object, etc.) arises. If someone else gets the object, jealousy manifests itself. Thus everything is aflame everywhere, within the mind of man. The mind is clouded with the smoke of the aftermath of this vile desire. Discrimination is lost. Clarity of vision is unknown. The Buddhi which is, as it were, the very house of the soul, affording it protection and shelter is destroyed. The man comes to mortal ruin perishes in the sense that the very purpose of his existence upon earth is defeated.

Hence the supreme need for control of the mind, control of thought itself, ere it is allowed to assume gross form in word or deed. When the mind is well controlled, it is possible to nourish the soul with the nectar of divine contemplation; and thus, ultimately, to become Immortal. May you become Immortal in this very birth.

Chapter Ten

PURIFICATION OF SELF

An ethically disciplined, morally purified and spiritually illumined soul is the goal of Gita-ethics. To attain this, the Lord exhorts the Man to spiritualise his entire personality. Of the three qualities that combine to make the personality of Man, Sattva is nearest Perfection, Rajas is necessary evil and Tamas is inertia, lowest form of bestiality and waste of life itself. The aim of the Gita-ethics is to eradicate Tamas in Man, and by wise control of the Rajasic element to make it Sattva's handmaid and to add to the quantum of Sattva in all possible ways.

An entire chapter of the Bhagavad Gita is devoted to the classification of the major factors of man's life into the three qualities-Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Knowing this, man can avoid the Tamasic, keep the Rajasic to the minimum and strive in every way to grow more and more Sattvic.

Worship: Worship of gods is Sattvic. Worship of Asuric beings is Rajasic. Adoration of ghosts and evil spirits is Tamasic.

Food: Food which increases life, purity, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are savoury and oleaginous, substantial and agreeable, is Sattvic. Food which is bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot, pungent, dry and burning is Rajasic food that causes pain, grief and diseases. Stale, tasteless, putrid and rotten, refuse and impure is Tamasic food. Eat that food which will develop Sattva in you. Milk, butter, fresh ripe fruits, almonds, green dhal, barley, parwal, torai, plantain, brinjal, etc, are Sattvic.

Yajna: Sacrifice offered by men, without desire for fruit, as enjoined by the scriptures, with a firm faith that such sacrifice is a duty, is Sattvic. The sacrifice offered, seeking for reward, and for ostentation, is Rajasic. The sacrifice which is contrary to the scriptures, in which no food is distributed, which is devoid of Mantras and gifts, and devoid of faith is Tamasic.

Austerities: The threefold austerity (of thought, word and speech--mentioned elsewhere in this volume) practised by steadfast men, with the utmost faith, desiring no reward, is called Sattvic. Austerity practised with the object of gaining honour and worship, by hypocrites, is Rajasic, and is bound to be unstable and transitory. That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion, with self-torture, or for the purpose of destroying another, is Tamasic.

Charity: The charity given to one who does nothing in return, knowing it to be one's own duty to give in a proper place and at the proper time to a worthy person is Sattvic. The gift that is made with the expectation of a return or looking for some kind of reward, or made reluctantly, is Rajasic. The gift which is made at a wrong place and time, to unworthy persons, without respecting the receiver or insulting is Tamasic.

Renunciation: When a duty is performed merely because it ought to be done, without attachment and expectation of reward- the Bhava is one of Sattvic Tyaga. Renunciation of actions from fear of bodily trouble because the action is painful is Rajasic and does not bear the

fruit of renunciation. The abandonment of obligatory action (which is not proper) on account of delusion is Tamasic renunciation.

Knowledge or Understanding: That by which one sees the One Indestructible Reality in all beings, the one homogeneous among the multifarious objects, that knowledge or understanding is Sattvic. That knowledge which generates the perception of various entities of distinct kinds as different from one another, is Rajasic. But that understanding which perverts the intellect and presents the unreal as the Real, the part as the whole, is Tamasic.

Actions (in general): One's duty performed without attachment, without love or hatred at heart and without desire for any reward, is Sattvic action. But that action which is performed by one longing for the fulfilment of desires, with egoism or with much effort, is Rajasic. That action which is undertaken from delusion, without regard for the consequences, loss or injury, and without regard to one's own abilities, is Tamasic.

The same division is made once again from the point of view of the performer of the actions. An agent (Karta) or performer of an action, who is free from attachment, non-egoistic, endowed with firmness and enthusiasm, and unaffected by success or failure is Sattvic. Passionate, desiring to obtain the fruit of actions, greedy, harmful, impure, moved by joy and sorrow, is the Rajasic agent. Unsteady, vulgar, unbending, cheating, malicious, lazy, desponding and procrastinating, is the Tamasic performer of actions.

Intelligence: The intellect which knows the paths of work and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, is Sattvic. That by which one wrongly understands Dharma and Adharma and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, that intellect is Rajasic. That which enveloped in darkness, sees Adharma as Dharma and all things perverted, is the Tamasic intellect.

Steadfastness (devotion): The unwavering firmness by which, through Yoga, the functions of the mind, the Prana, and the senses are restrained, is Sattvic Dhriti. The firmness by which, from attachment to fruits of actions, one holds fast to Dharma, desire and wealth, is Rajasic. That by which a stupid man does not abandon sleep, fear, grief, despair and also conceit is Tamasic firmness- it is foolish obstinacy.

Happiness: That which is like poison at first but is in the end like nectar, is Sattvic pleasure, born of the purity of one's own mind, due to Self-realisation. The pleasure which arises from the contact of the sense-organs with the object, at first like, nectar, and in the end like poison, is Rajasic. That "pleasure" which is at first and in the end sequel delusive of the Self, arising from sleep, indolence and heedlessness is Tamasic.

One point is worth noting in this classification and that is the repeated insistence of the Lord on non-attachment to actions and their fruits, on desirelessness and on maintaining a balanced state of mind.

The person who clearly understands this classification ever strives to add to the Sattvic content of his personality, eradicating the Tamasic and sublimating the Rajasic. When one is established in Sattva, the Light of Self-knowledge dawns in him and he shines as a Jivanmukta, Sthitaprajna, Bhagavata, or Yogi.

Chapter Eleven

THE GOSPEL OF FEARLESSNESS

One virtue alone is not perfection, as one limb is not a man. Man is a composite of many parts; and Perfection is composed of many excellences. Yet, if one virtue can be singled out as having enjoyed the privilege of Krishna's greatest admira-tion, it is "fearlessness,"-fearlessness in all its aspects, fearlessness that makes one a hero, in the words of the Kathopanishad "who would dare to defy Nature with the power of the Creator behind her, and to make the outgoing senses turn inward and the externalised current of thought from inward to discover its source and substratum"- in other words to take the Ganga back to its very source.

"Grieve not" is the keynote of the Gita. Fearlessness is the direct antidote to grief. When a fear is born or when a fear materialises, man is sunk in grief. Fearlessness, therefore cuts grief at the very root.

Understood in its proper light, this fearlessness itself is the fountain of virtues; for more often man errs and sins, not because he is ignorant of virtue nor because he is unwilling to practise virtue, but because he does not have the courage, the heroism, that fearless daring to hold aloft the banner of virtue even at the point of death; it is fear of something or other that makes him creep underneath vice even though he knows that he should not be there. With fearlessness, sincerity will get strength and earnestness will be effective. The man from whose heart fear has been expelled will be firm in his truth, unwavering in his devotion, unflinching. in his resolves, indefatigable in his service and Sadhana; for with fear has been driven out the greatest obstacle to spiritual progress, viz. weakness.

Who can proclaim this Gospel of Fearlessness with greater authority than the Lord Himself Who declares in unequivocal terms that He, the One, Infinite Omnipotent, Surpreme Lord of the entire universe is Himself the sole reality in and of each and every being in this universe? Can there be fear in Him? "Thou art That Supreme Being"; this is the ultimate Truth and the Last Word of the Upanishads. If you realise this, can fear arise in your heart even in dream? No.

It is when you feel that you are puny little creature, whom the whole Nature opposes, whose safety and security are threatened by everyone else in the universe, only when these deluded notions are present in your ignorant mind, that your knees shake and your heart sinks in fear; not when you meditate upon the sublime Truth "Ahamatma Gudakesa Sarvabhutasayasthiah" (I am the Self that dwells in the hearts of all beings);

"Isvarah Sarvabhutanam Hriddeserjuna

Tishthati; Bhramayan Sarvabhutani Yantrarudhani Mayaya, (God is seated in the hearts of all beings, making all beings revolve on the wheel of his Maya); Mayaa Tatamidam Sarvam (I am the thread that links all beings in the universe). God is the Sole Reality. And He is all-pervading. The self-same God that dwells in you dwells in all-from the highest divine being, the Creator, to the tiniest creature here. There is no "other person" in the universe to harm you; your own Self,

God, dwells in all. There is not a second entity in the universe whom you need fear. It is ignorance of this Unity that generates fear. Fearlessness, therefore, implies annihilation of this ignorance, and realisation of the Truth of Unity or Oneness.

In ignorance you desire. Of ignorance is fear born. Fear is, therefore, the twin-sister of desire. They are two sides of the same coin; they are the two heads of the same reptile. Fear of not attaining the desired object, fear of losing the object desired and obtained, fear of getting the object whose absence is desired- these are the basic fears. Desire is, therefore, termed by Lord Krishna as the greatest enemy of man. This desire is slain by an understanding of the Truth, by discrimination and dispassion, by contentment and constant practice of Sadhana. When this desire is slain, and when man attains the state of "Na Prahrishyet Priyam Prapya, Nodvijet Prapya Chaapriyam" (not getting elated when a desired thing is obtained, not shrinking away when an undesirable thing is got).

This attitude of mind towards life, this state of desirelessness is attained when man realises that it is some divine power that is behind everything that takes place here and gives up all egoistic notions. Then will he truly understand Karmanyevaadhikaraste Ma Phaleshu Kadachana. The Master of this vast house we call the universe is God. His will is done here. All beings here dance to His tunes. No one is your enemy, no one is eager to harm you. All beings are your own Self, whether you realise it or not; the same God who is the reality of your being dwells in all. The real enemy, on the other hand, is within you- the impure mind, the desire-filled heart, the fountain of Raga-Desha and the inveterate egoism. If fear you must, fear this diabolical nature of your own self. If you must run away from something or somebody, run away from this inner evil aspect of your own self. When you conquer this inner enemy, you will find that you have no external enemy to fear. When you vanish this inner enemy and run away from him, you will find that the growing feeling of unity and oneness draws you closer to all beings on earth and draws all beings closer to you. When fear dies, love is born. Love is your essential nature. Love is the light of the sun of unity and oneness. In fact, fear is not part of your essential nature. It is no reality. Fear is the product of ignorance; fear of the unknown. When this ignorance is removed by a correct understanding of the nature of the Universe and of God, you will realise that fear had no basis at all fears are baseless. With fearlessness thus regained, you will recover not only that priceless pearl of Atma-Jnana, but the sweetest elixir of life-love.

The greatest fear that haunts a man is fear of the Unknown. What was Before that has brought about what is Now? What will be Hereafter (or Beyond) and what relation has that with what is Now? These questions constantly harass Man, whether he is conscious of them or not. Lord Krishna deals a deft stroke at the root of the problem--which is really attachment to the present incarnation over the fate of which man is constantly worried--by declaring: "The origin is hidden from you; and the life beyond is veiled too. The present life that is apparently revealed to you is but a fleeting moment in Eternity; why worry over it?" Better seize the moment and make the most of it. Live while there is life; and live wisely and well, in accordance with the Gita-Dharma. Dedicate your life to the moment; and out of this union will spring Eternal life. For, your soul is Immortal; and if you put your heart and soul into your life every moment, your life, too, will share the characteristic of your soul. Forget the past; worry not over the future. Do your duty now, egolessly and selflessly. In the joy and satisfaction of the performance of your duty in the right spirit, when the past and the future vanish from your thought, the present becomes the Eternal Now. At that moment you will realise: "The Self residing in all beings is indestructible. It does not

die with the body." Life belongs to you; not death, for you never die. The body is cast off, even as worn-out clothes are cast off; but you don't die. Let, therefore, life be your concern; not death. Infuse life into your life. Let not the gloom of death mar the lustre of your life. Sink not in despair; yield not to impotence; quake not with fear. Live. Live. Live the divine life.

Now, this concept is a good ideal. Even the man who wishes to drown himself swims back to the shore. Life loves to live. In the death of the physical body, life departs from the body in order to live in another! Life knows no death. Therefore it is that man does not want to die. He does not even like diseases which seriously interfere with life. He wants to lead a life full life.

But the physical body with which man is associated while alive as an individual here, is somehow or other subject to diseases, decay and death. What ever scientists may feel, the real root cause of diseases is unknown. That is what made the primitive man ascribed diseases to the wrath of the gods. Man dreads diseases. The antidote to this fear is the realisation of their transitoriness. They belong to the negative forces of the universe, which have no real existence. Life is eternal; not death. And life implies the condition we know as health which is nothing but life perfectly living. Diseases come and go; life or health endures. Diseses are the inevitable concomitants of the body composed of the five elements: therefore, cheerfully endure them (Titikshasva), knowing full well their fleeting character. Similar is the case with old age, too. Youth, manhood, old age, etc, are but periods; and periods are rolling waves on the ocean of eternity. Eternity is your essential nature; therefore, look with unconcerned tranquillity at the transient waves of childhood, youth, manhood and old age. Fear of change will vanish when you are rooted in the Changeless Immortality of thy essential
nature.

The same argument of the transitory nature of mundane objects, and the fleeting characteristic of life on earth, is brought forth to counteract man's fear of losing his possessions. The objects of this world are not only impermanent, but they are the wombs of pain and misery. The wise man would shun them. This dispassion is the most powerful antidote to the fear of losing wealth or property. The fear of loss can be eradicated totally by the acquisition of That "gaining which nothing else would be considered worth aspiring for"; and that is a knowledge of the Treasure of treasures, Atma-Jnana. The aspirant who would like to gain That would love to lose everything else; and every loss would be for him a joyous gain! This change in the angle of vision is the greatest antidote to fear.

Honour is a bait that has caught many a fish of man and hooked him to transmigration. It is an illusion; but, withal, more powerful than the illusion of grosser sense-pleasure even. To get the coveted honour, man would often sacrifice sense-pleasure and what is worse descend to dishonourable depths. The fear of losing this honour is a fountain of vices. To maintain it, man would shrink from no crime! History abounds in examples of Asuric men who would not hesitate to sacrifice millions of lives in order to sustain their honour, their position as "Emperor!" Even some good people mistake Kirti for honour. They feel that as Lord Sri Krishna has equated Akirti to a condition worse than death, it is the primary duty of everyone to preserve his honour. Kirti is not honour. Very often Kirti has been constructed out of the ashes of honour. Remember the stories of Dharmaputra, Harischandra, Nala and so many others. What an amount of dishonour they had to court and honour they had to lose, before their Kirti could be established upon this earth! This Kirti has no equivalent in the English language, though for the lack of a better word it is translated into "fame". Kirti is a good thing; for it is the fragrance of righteousness that

emanates from great souls and attracts mankind to them; it is resplendent lustre that surrounds the divine among men and inspires others to grow in virtue and get that lustre. Therefore, it promotes virtue. Honour may or may not. People emulate the examples of men of Kirti: Yad Yadacharati Sreshastattadeva Itaro Janah. Therefore it is that Lord Sri Krishna extols Kirti while He treats honour and dishonour with equal indifference. What is significant, however, is that Kirti is entirely subjective, it is the fragrance of one's illumined soul, so that it can never be taken away from him unless he himself chooses to lose it by "losing the soul". Therefore, whereas man may fear that he may lose his honour through the actions of others, he possibly cannot lose his Kirt in that manner. Therefore, there is no fear of losing Kirti, as such. And losing Kirt in the sense of losing the fragrance of Dharma is unworthy. 1 Gita teaches man that who has no enemies outside him-self. Therefore, to one who practises the Gita-Dharma, there is no enemy in the world. He is not subject to fear or opponents. The inner enemy is to be conquered; the external enemy is to be loved as dearly as the dearest friend! Love of humanity which is born of this attitude towards humanity, the Virat-Svarupa of the Lord, enables to live intensely for the welfare of mankind, giving to every moment his very soul which is Eternal, thus ignoring fear which does not belong to him, enduring diseases and old age which are passing shadows, remaining indifferent to loss of wealth and honour which are illusory and unnecessary for his glorious mission in life loving service of all humanity in the conviction-Vasudevah Sarvam (all this is Lord Vasudeva Himself). Thus is utter fearlessness gained and man's heart is filled with cosmic love.

Chapter Twelve

COSMIC LOVE: THE KEY TO BLESSEDNESS

Fear engenders hatred; fearlessness is the harbinger of
love.

The Gita-ideal of love is based upon the truth: Ahamatma Gudakesa Sarvabhutasayasthitah (I am the Self of all beings). This Truth is the very foundation of the Gita Ethics; therefore, the Lord untiringly repeats it in various words and in several contexts, quite a number of times through the Bhagavad Gita. Yo Mam Pasyati Sarvatra Sarvam cha Mayi Pasyati (He who sees Me in all beings in Me); Sarvabhutasthitam Yo Mam Bhajatyekatvamasthitah (He who worships Me, seated in all beings, rooted in Unity); Mayi Sarvamidam Protam Sutre Maniganaa Iva (everything is strung in Me as beads are strung on thread); Vasudevassarvamiti (all this is indeed Vasudeva, God); Maya Tatamidam Sarvam (all this is connected together by Me); Vishtabhyaham idam Kritsnam Ekamsena Sthito Jagat (by a small part of Myself I pervade all these things) etc.

God is one, though appearing to be different in different beings (Avibhaktam Vibhakteshu Vibhaktamiva cha Sthitam). This Supreme One ever strives to realise its unity. This wil-to-unity it is that manifests at all levels of creation as gravitation, magnetism, attraction; herding instinct, and love. Even aversion presupposes attraction; it is when one is attracted to something that one feels and aversion towards some other thing. The fundamental element of love which is the nature of God, the One-in-all, is there even in this attraction (Raga), but it is tinged with delusion, with an imperfect understanding of the nature of God, and, therefore, of this unifying force called Love.

God is One and, therefore, all-pervading, equally in all.

Love, too, should flow towards all beings in equal and abundant measure. This love is not a mere deluded attraction towards some objects, generating in its trail hatred or revulsion from some other objects; but it is the manifesting of the Unity of God, and of the unifying force of the omnipresent Power of God.

Therefore, it is that the saints are said to be Sarvabhutahiteratah (devoted to the welfare of all beings). Their love is free from the dual currents of attraction and repulsion. Swimming in the ocean of all-pervading love, they know not of an object they could hate or turn way from. They condemn none. They love all. This love is not deluded attachment; for attachment breeds hatred also. Therefore, their love is not showy affection. It is genuine, though subtle, subtler than the force of gravitation. They radiate love; and therefore, it is said that in their very presence "natural" foes lose their enmity.

This love partakes not only of the omnipresent nature of God; but it is Omnipotent, too. The saint's is not love in words; it is love in action service, love in expression is service. The absence of desire and attachment makes that service selfless.

Chapter Thirteen

THE DYNAMICS OF SELFLESS SERVICE

Before proceeding to consider the bearing that the Ethics of the Bhagavad Gita has upon the various aspects of human conduct, it is important to emphasise that the cosmic love that forms the fundamental basis of these ethics is not an ideal to be fondly meditated upon, nor an idol to be bowed to from a distance, nor even an idler's subject-for-gossip. Cosmic love is a very, very hard taskmaster. No doubt it is elixir for the inner spirit, a tonic for life itself and a fountain of eternal youthfulness and dynamism; but it has often demanded and inflicted a heavy toll on the physical, grosser and material part of man. Cosmic love is the confluence of paradoxes. This is extremely important to note and bear in mind always. It demands great sacrifices which are always made with the greatest delight. It demands ruthless renunciation of worldly pleasures and comforts; and this renunciation is embraced with ecstatic bliss. It demands the merciless severance of all worldly connections, relationship and affections; even this is done with a cheerful face and joyous spirit. Cosmic love only demands the annihilation of what in truth is a limitation, a littleness, a bondage, a painful condition (though in an unenlightened state, this might appear to be pleasurable!), in order that you might enter the Kingdom of Limitless Joy, Infinite Bliss, Ineffable Peace and Immortal Life.

For the sake of Dharma Lord Rama renounced His Consort. Cosmic love transformed Prince Siddhartha into a mendicant, wandering along the streets of his erstwhile kingdom, with a begging bowl. In order that mankind might awake from the slumber of ignorance and walk the path of righteousness, Lord Jesus sacrificed His Life itself on the Cross. Beware of paying lip-sympathy to cosmic love!

Ask yourself: "How near have I approached the ideal of Sarva-Bhuta-hite-ratah (devoted to the welfare of all beings)?" That is the acid test of cosmic love. Not a moment of time is yours; it is given to you for being utilised in the service of humanity. Not a grain of food, nor a copper coin, nor a sublime thought, nor even a spiritual experience, is given to you for your private consumption: Cosmic love demands that you should share all with all. The food that you give your own body, the clothes with which you cover it, and the knowledge that you pour into your mind, have justification only in the measure in which your body is utilised in the service of humanity, and the mind is made the instrument through which solace, peace, happiness and enlightenment is brought to His children. Otherwise: Bhunjate te-tvagham Papa Ye Pachanyatmakaranat: if you cook food for your own consumption, you eat not food but terrible sin! Here, food is used symbolically. It refers to everything. Your wealth, your physical strength, your intellectual acumen and your spiritual light are all for others, for all beings.

But this does not give you a licence to interfere in other people's affairs, and in the name of cosmic love and selfless service, disturb the peace and create disharmony in the world. We have seen how sometimes big nations vie with each other in "rendering help to backward

nations" "civilising an uncivilised country" "educating the illiterate masses" "raising the standard of living of the poor"- these are all cloaks which often hide nefarious intentions. The motive behind is not cosmic love, but masked selfishness and greed. Therefore, the Lord warns that Svadharme Nidhanam Sreyah, Para-Dharmo Bhayavahah.

Our Puranas and stories of saints are replete with exemplars of the performance of duty. Cosmic love only demands that you should be beyond Raga (attraction towards particular persons and things), Desha (dislike for some persons or things) and Bhaya (fear). In the heart must be enshrined the light of the Truth "Sarvam Brahmamayam" "Isavasyamidam Sarvam" "Ahamatma Gudakesa Sarvabhutasaya sthitah" and this light must be ever kept alive in the heart. All your actions should be performed in this light. Then, the very performance of your own duty, with the right spirit of selfless service of humanity, would itself liberate you from Samsara Sve Sve Karmanyabhiratah Samsiddhim Labhate Narah-"Engaged in the performance of his own duties, man attains to Perfection."

The inner Bhava, or attitude, transforms work into worship. The heart is filled with cosmic love; and the inner spiritual vision perceives the Lord present in all things and His Consciousness pervading every thing that exists: it is easy to understand how this man would behave towards people and how he would perform his daily duties. The bottle of medicine is filled with God's Power; the patient standing before you is God in human form; he accepts the doses of medicine you give. him; it is your worship of God. You won't throw away anything, you won't behave rudely towards anyone; you won't treat anyone or anything with contempt. For, you perceive that all things and all beings are filled with His Glory, His Light, His Life and His Love.

That is cosmic love. Therefore, Svakarmana Tamabhyarchya Siddhim Vindati Manavah- -By Worshipping the Lord with the flowers of his daily activities, man attains to Perfection.

May you all shine as Jivanmuktas, Janis, Yogins and Bhaktas in this very birth.

Chapter Fourteen

MAN AND HUMANITY

The world is as real as you are. So long as you feel that you exist as an individual, so long will you have to take notice of the existence of the world. When Brahma-Jnana dawns in you and you perceive the Self-resplendent Self within yourself; you will realise that this Self is all-pervading, permeating every atom of creation.

As an individual you are a unit in this world. As the Self, you are one with the world, one with the entire universe. You can never separate yourself from the world. On you depends the world and you depend on the world. There is mutual interdependence.

There is not only this mutual interdependence among the people of this world, but also between the people of this world and the celestials in heaven in other words between the beings in the whole universe.

Therefore, the Lord created Yajna-a spirit of self-sacrifice in all beings while creating them. This Yajna is the milch-cow that will yield all the desired fruits. And, the Creator said to Man: "Approach the celestials (and others) with this Yajna-spirit, then nourish them with this sacrifice and they will, in their turn nourish you." This is the Creator's Wheel: and it is His Will. No one can escape this, till one attains Jana and attains release from the Creator's grip.

This spirit of Yajna itself is the secret of Liberation.

Yajnarthaat Karmanonyatra Lokoyam Karmabandhanah: all action, except those performed as Yajna, are binding in this world. The same action performed with selfish motive binds you to the Samsara; and performed as a selfless service, in the spirit of Yajna, it liberates you from Samsara. Therefore, perform your duties in a spirit of sacrifice, without attachment. You will be liberated.

Every householder should perform the five great
Yajnas -Pancha Maha Yajnas daily. They are:

1. Deva-Yajna offering sacrifices to gods which will satisfy the Devas.
2. Brahma-Yajna or Rishi-Yaina-teaching and reciting the scriptures which will satisfy Brahman and Rishis.
3. Pitri-Yajna offering libations of water to one's ancestors which will satisfy the Pitris.
4. Nri-Yana-the feeding of the hungry and the guests.
5. Bhuta-Yajna- the feeding of the animals.

The daily performance of these five Yajnas purifies the heart quickly and enables the Light of Self-knowledge to shine brightly in the heart. It is obvious that the performance of these Yajnas presupposes and also helps cultivation of selflessness to a very high degree of perfection. The non-performance of these Yajnas, of course, signifies selfishness in the man: how can a selfish man ever hope to attain Self-realisation?

Therefore, the Lord emphasises that Yajna, Dana and Tapas, should never be abandoned by any man, however spiritually advanced he might be. Even the great ones, the sages and saints are characterised by the Lord as 'Sarva-Bhuta-Hite-Ratah' (devoted to the welfare of all beings). It is in order to leave no room for doubt in this regard that the Lord engaged Himself in unwearied action during His Krishna Avatara.
The Lord does not leave the definition of this Yajna by merely characterising it as "detachment": He goes into great detail-for, this is the all-important governing principle of life.

YadrichchalabhasantushtoDvandvateeto Vimatsarah
Samah Siddhavasiddhau cha kritvaapi na nibadhyate

"Content with what comes to him without effort, free from the pairs of opposites and envy, even-minded in success and failure though acting he is not bound."
How can a man who is serving selflessly in a spirit of self-sacrifice ever expect anything? To serve is thy duty, and thy privilege, not to reward. Effort is to be put forth to serve others; not to attain any object. Without specific effort for the attainment of that object, whatever comes is the Lord's gift, to be accepted with reverence. You should at the same time be free from the pairs of opposites-honour and dishonour, praise and insult, love and hatred, etc. and free from envy. Envy has been singled out for special emphasis because that is the one evil quality that greatly taints the spirit of self-sacrifice. This evil creeps into the heart of even great Karma Yogins and causes their downfall. "I have served selflessly all these years; but he, who has not served anyone at all, has attained name, fame and prosperity, whilst I have remained unknown and penniless,"-when this thought arises in the mind, know that Yajna has come to an end and that Kama has started and the downward progress has commenced! Beware. Where there is the least envy there cannot be Yoga, no spirituality, no Jana. He who performs his duties in the spirit of Yajna is even-minded in success and failure: obviously, because he is not concerned with the fruits of the actions he performs as his duty. To one who works in this way, the actions are not binding. They themselves purify his heart and help Liberation. All his actions are burnt in the fire of Yajna.
The Lord gives a mystic definition of the Yajna-a great
Mantra which at once elevates you to Brahmic heights:

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havirbrahmagnau Brahmana Hutam
Brahmaiva Tena GantavyamBrahmakarma-samadhinaa

"Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is the clarified butter; by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action.'
Repeat this Mantra often during the day, during your work.Again and again, generate this Bhava. You will soon be established in Brahman. After the performance of each action, offer it as "Brahmarpanam". You will be freed from the clutches of Prakriti who keeps up this world-show.
The Lord goes farther and gives a list of the Yajnas, to show the essential elements, and the different ways in which people, endowed with different temperaments, approach the Goal-Yajna.

1. Some Yogins perform sacrifice to Devatas alone, in accordance with the injunctions of the Vedas.
2. Others offer the self as sacrifice by the Self in the fire of Brahman alone. They are the Jnana Yogins who negate the little self and assert the identity of the Self with Brahman.
3. Some again offer sound and other senses as sacrifices in the fire of self-restraint. They are the great Tapasvins.
4. Others offer sound and other objects of senses as sacrifices in the fire of the senses. They are the Grihasthis who lead the ideal divine life, allowing their senses to accept pure and unforbidden objects of the senses.
5. Others again sacrifice all the functions of the senses and the functions of the breath (Prana) in the fire of the Yoga of self-restraint kindled by knowledge. They are the Raja Yogins who withdraw the senses and the mind inward and in Samadhi attain superconscious Experience, and transcendental knowledge.
6. Others perform the Yajna of charity. They are the philanthropists who ceaselessly perform charity. By charity their heart is expanded and in due time they attain knowledge of the Self.
7. Others again perform the Yajna of austerity: they adopt various methods to get over the body-idea, of selfishness, greed, etc.
8. To others Yoga itself is a Yajna.
9. The ascetics of self-restraint and rigid vows offer study of scriptures and knowledge itself as sacrifice.
10. Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming, and the incoming in the outgoing, restraining the courses of the outgoing and incoming, breaths, solely absorbed in the restraint of breath. They are the Hatha Yogins who strive for the Kevala Kumbhaka or the suspension of breath, through which they attain Manolaya and eventually absorption in the Self.
11. Yet others are given to fasting and other methods of regulating the food of the senses. thus the Prana is conserved and offered as an oblation into itself. The Prana thus comes under complete control and with it the mind- and this self-control leads to Self-realisation.
These and many others are the Yajnas that enable Man to get best of the life on earth and attain Moksha, too. One who has not got the spirit of self-sacrifice lives in vain: he is not loved by people here. He leads a miserable life here. Nor does he attain heaven. Moksha is something he dare not even dream of.
How should a Yajna be performed and how it should not be, is discussed by the Lord while speaking of the division of everything into the three catagories-Sattvic, Rajasic and Tamasic. When a sacrifice is offered by man, without desire for reward as enjoined in the scriptures, with a firm faith that it is his sacred duty to serve selflessly, it is Sattvic or pure sacrifice. When, however, the sacrifice is performed with a desire for a particular reward and for show, it is Rajasic Yajna. When it is contrary to the injunctions of the Sastras, in which neither the Mantras are chanted nor charity done, and in which the performer himself has no real faith--it is Tamasic. Avoid the Tamasic; strive to rise above Rajasic and get established in the Sattvic form of Yajna-Yajna not only means ritualistic sacrifice, but all selfless acts of service.
Finally, remember always the Lord's Commandments:

Yatkaroshi Yadashnasi Yajjuhoshi Dadasi Yat
Yattapasyasi Kaunteya Tat Kurushva Madarpanam

"Whatever thou dost, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatever thou givest, whatever thou practiseth as austerity, O Kaunteya, do it as an offering unto Me."
This is the supreme secret of the Yaina-spirit. Work as His Instrument. Offer every action to Him as Brahmarpanam, as a flower of your heart's devotion to His Lotus-Feet. You will be liberated here and now.

Chapter Fifteen

THE FOUR CASTES IN SOCIETY AND THEIR SPECIAL DUTIES

Call them by what names you like, the Four Castes-Brahmana (the religious), Kshatriya (the ruling class), Vaishya (merchant) and Sudra (servant) -are universal. The Lord is very severe, in the Bhagavad Gita, in regard to the division of the castes. Guna and Karma are both taken into consideration in the division of the castes. May be, the Purva-Karma, or the merits acquired in previous births, might bestow on a Jiva, birth as a Brahmin. But, if the Guna that predominates in him is not in accordance with that which ought to prevail in a Brahmana, he cannot be regarded as one. A man may possess the Guna that goes with a Kshatriya; but if he engages himself in business, he can no longer be considered a Kshatriya, in truth. When these principles are ignored, the caste system becomes just a formality.

What are the Gunas that characterise the Four Castes?

In a Brahmin, Sattva predominates. He possesses self-restraint, purity, straightforwardness, serenity, etc. In a Kshatriya, Rajas predominates. He possesses prowess, splendour, firmness, dexterity, generosity, in short the nature of a ruler. In a Vaishya, Rajas predominates and there is Tamas, too. He does the duty of ploughing, protection of cattle and trade. In a Sudra, Tamas predominates and Rajas is subordinate to Tamas. He serves the other three castes.

The Purusha-Sukta beautifully assigns to these Four
Castes, various parts of the Virat-Being's Body. The Brahmin is assigned the Head and the Sudra the Feet. This, however does not in any way give undue importance to any one caste. As all the limbs are necessary to make the man whole, all the castes are equal. The society stands on its legs (Sudras), though it might have a halo around its head (Brahmins).

The Lord, in the Bhagavad Gita itself, has emphatically declared the fundamental equality of people belonging to all the castes: Striyo-Vaishya-statha-Sudra Te-api Yanti Param Gatim- Women, Vaishyas and Sudras, even they can attain the Supreme State (Moksha or Final Liberation), thus silencing the notion prevalent then that as these were not allowed to recite the Vedas they had no access to the Path to Self-realisation. Sve Sve Karmanyabhiratah Samsiddhim Labhate Narah: engaged in one's own duties the man attains Perfection, said the Lord. For, it is the Bhava or the mental attitude, with which the duty is performed that really matters. The Bhava is laid down by the Lord in that soul-elevating half-Sloka: Sva-karmana Tamabhyarchya Siddhim Vindati Manavah,-worshipping the Lord with his actions, man attains Perfection. Mark the word "worshipping": that one word contains the very essence of the Gita-Amrita. Perform all actions as divine Worship, as devout worship of the Lord who is seated in all beings and in you, too; and you are on the Path to God-realisation- to whichever caste you belong and whatever be the nature of the work you are engaged in.

Having the classification of the Four Castes, the Lord gives a general definition of their duties, also.

The crown of the Brahmana is adorned with these nine dazzling gems. Serenity, self-restraint, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, knowledge, realisation, belief in God and scriptures these are the nine duties of a Brahamana. O Brahmins! Here are the caste-marks that the Lord has imposed upon you. Introspect and analyse yourselves- are you putting on these divine caste-marks on your forehead every day? Have you cultivated the quality of serenity: only in a serene mind will the Light of God descend. Self-restraint ought to be your second nature; and austere should be your life, not one given to luxury. Be pure in thought, word and deed. Become an embodiment of forgiveness: bear insult and bear injury. Be truthful, honest and straightforward in all your dealings with the world. Acquire scriptural knowledge; attain Self-realisation. Have unshakable faith in God and the scriptures. Then you are a Brahmana, in truth.

The duties of a Kshatriya are equally ennobling and edifying. He should be strong and powerful. He should be brave and chivalrous. He must be a Tejasvi! The splendour of which the Lord speaks here is not the splendour of a golden armour or gaudy dress: it is the brilliance of the soul, magnetic personality, divine aura, acquired by the Kshatriya by leading a divine life, devoted to the practice and the protection of Dharma. Firmness is one of the cardinal virtues of the King. He must think well and consult his ministers, before arriving at a decision: then he should stand firm in his resolve. The fate of all his subjects hangs upon him: if he is of an ever-changing temperament it would inflict untold misery upon his subjects. Dexterity and promptness of action characterise the ruler. He must have a sharp, subtle intellect, that would grasp matters at once; and he must have well-developed discrimination that would promptly arrive at a decision and at the right way of executing it.

All these would become easy only if the ruler is guided by the Eternal Dharma, and by the advice of saints and sages, his own Guru. For the sake of the preservation of Dharma, the Kshatriya is allowed to wage war. But, in this connection, it is good to bear in mind the Lord's own example: a study of the Mahabharata would reveal that the Lord, though He was omniscient and knew that the war was inevitable, did endeavour to avoid the war and come to a peaceful settlement with the enemy, and that he advised war only when this was inevitable. Dharmic battle for a Kshatriya is Svarga-Dvara-the gateway to heaven. If even here the Kshatriya adopts the attitude of Nimittha (God's instrument), he can attain Liberation even through the battle. Therefore, the Lord lays down "not flying away from the battlefield" as one of the qualifications of a Kshatriya. Then comes another important virtue generosity. He should feel that all his subjects are his own children how very generous in every way would the ruler then be towards his subject! He is the Lord of the people placed by God under his care. He protects them. He is really an Amsa of God as he performs here the divine duty which the Lord has imposed upon Himself, viz., protection of the righteous, subdual of the wicked, and the preservation of Dharma. This is the Kshatriya's foremost duty.

The Vaishya should engage himself in agriculture, cattle-rearing and trade. And, serving the other three castes is the duty of the Sudra.

It does not mean that the Vaishya need not equip himself with the great virtues of truthfulness, straightforwardness, etc. The fundamental ethical principles laid down in the Bhagavad Gita apply to all, to whichever caste or order of life they might belong: only the special duties and responsibilities of the people belonging to each caste are laid down here.

Do your own duty. Mind your own business. This is better than encroaching upon the field of another and usurping his place. In the performance of your own duty lies Sreyas; and venturing upon another's field of work entails fearful consequences.
Even if one's duties the duties pertaining to his caste appear to be faulty, one should not abandon them. Punishing the wicked is a Kshatriya's duty, though outwardly it might look like Himsa. Earning reasonable profit is permissible for a Vaishya though it might appear to be greed. Ultimately, it should be realised that all actions in this Vyavaharic world are tainted by defect and sin: one should, therefore, perform them with detachment, and as a mere instrument in the hands of the Lord, as His worship, in accordance with His Will. After doing all actions everyone should offer them all as
"Brahmarpanam" or "Krishnarpanam". Then the actions would not bind him.

Chapter Sixteen

SWEET NOTES FROM SRI KRISHNA'S FLUTE

1. Be a man. Yield not to weakness. Weakness of the heart is the fountain of sins.
2. Childhood, youth, old age and death are stages in the soul's progress; none of these awes a hero.
3. The experiences of the world come and go; endure them. That is the road to Immortality.
4. The false glitter of unreal objects cannot endure for long; triumph is for Truth. Victory is to the good alone.
5. Bow to the inevitable. Strive for the ideal.
6. Care not for the name and fame. Court not dishonour and ill-fame. Ill-fame acquired through unrighteousness is worse than death.
7. Righteously fight the battle of life. If you win you will enjoy peace, happiness and prosperity here; even if you have to face calamities and failures here, you will enjoy in heaven.
8. Equanimity enables you to transcend sin.
9. Serve, serve and serve: to serve all is thy privilege.
10. Shun vicious actions, words and even thoughts.
11. Take a deep interest in everything you do: Yoga is skilfulness in action.
12. Let not worldly miseries disturb the tranquillity of your heart. Let not worldly pleasures bind you to the objects. Give up attachment, fear and anger and roam about fearlessly.
13. Be always cheerful; cheerfulness keeps misery away.
14. Abandon desire. Give up desire. Annihilate desire.
Desire is your greatest enemy.
15. It is sin to be selfish. It is the greatest sin to eat without sharing your meal with the poor and the lower creatures.
16. Be exemplary in your character. Your actions should inspire others to lead the divine life of truth, love and purity.
17. Never disturb the faith of others. Help each one to find his or her own path, according to his or her temperament.
18. Not suppression of the natural functions of the bodily organs, but the sublimation of life itself is the end and aim of
Yoga.
19. Rise above Raga-Dvesha, likes and dislikes; you will not be bound to Samsara, even though you work unceasingly.
20. Do your duty; mind your business. Do not embrace another person's Dharma; don't poke your nose in other people's affairs.
21. First control the senses; then you will be able to subdue the demon within you desire.

22. When you commence an action, feel "This is my worship of the Lord. I want nothing but a chance to serve Him in all. His Will be done." Give up desire and give up doership: feel you are only a Nimitta (instrument) in His Hands.
23. Give your hands to work and heart to God. This is Yoga.
24. Give, give: give alms, give clothes, give shelter to the destitute. But the gift of Knowledge is better than all these. Inspire everyone to practise Sadhana and realise God here and now; this is supreme selfless service to humanity.
25. Serve your Guru untiringly. Earn his grace; and by his grace you will attain knowledge of the Self.
26. Cast off all doubts. Have faith in the words of the scriptures and your Guru.
27. Even while you are engaged in actions, feel inwardly that the senses move among sense-objects and that you do nothing.
28. Remain in the world as a lotus-leaf remains in water- untouched by worldliness.
29. Constantly think of God; become established in God; make God and God alone your supreme goal. You will reach the lotus-feet of God here and now and return no more to this world of pain and death.
30. See God in all: in a dog and an elephant, in a Brahmin and a Pariah.
31. The wise ones do not delight in the pleasure of the senses.
32. Conserve and transmute the energy that manifests in you as lust and anger: it will greatly help you in your meditation, and in your selfless service.
33. Run not after the mirage of sense-pleasures. Look within. Dive within in the ocean of Eternal Bliss.
34. Be devoted to the service of all beings: this is the easiest way to attain Cosmic Consciousness. 01
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35. Strive in every way to elevate yourself; never to court downfall.
36. Rise above the pairs of opposites heat and cold, honour and dishonour, pain and pleasure, success and failure.
37. Resort to seclusion; Practise meditation.
38. Covet not other's property; do not become a slave to luxury.
39. Eat a little, drink a little, talk a little, sleep a little, work a little, rest a little, meditate a little, and cogitate a little. This is the simple way to attain integral Perfection.
40. Restrain the mind by intelligent means, by continued practice and by the cultivation of Vairgaya (dispassion).
41. If you are suffering from pain, strive to obtain relief from prayer to God. If you are eager to acquire knowledge pray to God. If you want worldly goods, then, too, pray to God. If you are a wise man who seeks Moksha, then pray to God. It is good to resort to His Lotus-Feet, whatever be the purpose; and it is better to pray to Him only for devotion and liberation.
42. Mentally repeat and feel: "Vasudevah Sarvam"
"Sarvam Brahmamayam" "Sarvam Vishnumayam" "Sarvam
Sivamayam" "Sarvam Saktimayam."
43. Always think of God and repeat His Name mentally: no one knows which is the last breath. If the last thought is of God, you will attain God.
44. Of vain hopes, vain actions, vain knowledge and senseless is the man of Asuric nature.

45. But that Mahatma who is of divine nature worships God with a single-minded devotion, always glorifying Him, striving to attain Him by being, firm in his vows, and always prostrating to Him in all beings, he worships God with steadfast devotion. Shun the ways of the Asuric beings; become a Mahatman.
46. Think of God constantly; this is your duty. To look after your welfare is the duty of the Lord who created you.
47. Whatever you do, whatever charities you perform, whatever you enjoy, and whatever austerity and Sadhana you do, do everything as an
offering unto the Lord-Brahmarpanam. You will thus be freed from birth and death.
48. Having taken birth in this world of pain and death, worship the Lord.
49. Fill your mind with thoughts of God; fill your heart with devotion to God; let your hands constantly perform actions for His sake; let your head bow down to Him Who is seated in all beings. This is the royal road to Self-realisation.
50. Wise ones realise that God is the source of all and thus are constantly engaged in meditation.
51. Their minds are wholly absorbed in God; they live in Him for His sake; they talk to each other about Him; they are self-satisfied and delighted in the very thought of God.
52. Hate not any being; God dwells in all.
53. Fix your mind on Him; worship Him with steadfast devotion and supreme faith--this is the best Yoga.
54. Renounce the fruits of actions: this is the greatest secret of the Bhagavad Gita.
55. Care not for the reward: do your duty.
56. Whether you succeed or fail, the performance of your duty itself is your best reward.
57. Develop forgiving nature: nay, love all and never let your heart feel that anyone has done anything to you which you need to forgive. Thank the one that helps you; be grateful to the one that injures you or insults you.
58. Remember this great ideal: no one should be afraid of you nor should you be afraid of anyone. Frame your conduct accordingly.
59. Be free from a sense of want; be pure; be an adept in all actions; be unconcerned about the outcome of your efforts; let not your heart be troubled by any event; offer all your actions and their fruits to Him.
60. Develop contentment. Be contented with whatever comes to you- that is the Lord's gift to you, His Grace.
61. Treat this body of yours, and the body of every being on earth, as the living and moving Temples of the Lord. Do not defile it.
62. Do not injure anyone in thought, word or deed: prostrate to everyone, greeting all as the visible manifestations of the Lord.
63. Do daily Svadhyaya of the Vibhuti Yoga chapter of the Gita: remember His special manifestations here and do
Namaskara daily to them.
64. God dwells even in the evil man: hate not anyone.
65. Be humble.
66. Do not pretend what you are not in reality.
67. Be upright in your dealings.

68. Serve your Guru selflessly, wholeheartedly, willingly, obediently, and humbly.
69. Be pure in thought; word and deed.
70. Be steadfast in your faith in God, devotion to the Guru, adherence to Dharma, and attempt to reach the Goal of Life.
71. Self-control is the greatest conquest.
72. Do not hanker after sense-objects.
73. Kill egoism ruthlessly; first root out its various manifestations, lust, anger, greed, vanity, etc., and then acquire Knowedge of the Self so that the subtlest ego might be annihilated.
74. Constantly reflect upon the evils of birth, death, old age, sickness, and pain, that characterise this Samsara: you will develop dispassion and discrimination.
75. Do not identify yourself with this body of yours, nor with your son, wife, home and the rest, that are born of this false identification with the body.
76. Shun the company of worldly men.
77. Whenever you can, go into seclusion: contemplate on God.
78. Cultivate fearlessness: love all and serve all.
79. Speak the truth at all costs.
80. Be peaceful. Behave peacefully. Radiate peace to all.
81. Be gentle and sweet in your speech, in your look, in your actions.
82. Be modest. Be humble. Be noble.
83. Be firm in your resolves and in your vows.
84. Endure with fortitude.
85. Renounce lust, anger and greed: these are the gateways to Hell.
86. Let the scriptures and the instructions of your spiritual preceptor guide your conduct.
87. Renounce selfishness: renounce all selfish actions.
88. Worship the Lord with the performance of your duties: you will soon attain Him.

Chapter Seventeen

SELF-SURRENDER

Sarva-Dharman Parityajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja, Aham Tva Sarvapapebhyo Mokshayishyami Maa Sucha.

This is the Supreme Promise, Emphatic Assurance, that the Lord has given us in the Bhagavad Gita.

When all is said and done, individual intellect is finite, and individual will is weak and impotent. The Lord is All-Knowledge, Absolute Knowledge Itself and Omniscient. His Will is Omnipotent and Mighty. Even a dry leaf cannot be wafted by the strongest gale if it is not His Will. And, this truth has been beautifully illustrated in the beautiful story told in the Kenopanishad where Agni and Vayu the very gods of fire and wind--themselves find unable to deal with a bit of straw placed before them by the Divine Being.

In truth, the Jiva is a spark of Para-Brahman; his intellect is a part of the Absolute Chit; his will is part and parcel of the Divine Will. But the identity, intellect and will of the Jiva are all limited by Avidya (ignorance) and the Upadhis (limiting adjuncts); therefore, the Jiva feels he is a separate entity endowed with an independent existence, intelligence and will

The best way to eradicate this ignorance is by self-surrender. For in this surrender all the false assumptions raised by ignorance are sacrificed. The existence, the Reality, of the One and Only Supreme Being alone is recognised. The spark of consciousness that shines in man, lending the light and power to his intelligence, his will, his senses and the mind, is recognised to be identical with the Conflagration of Cosmic Consciousness. Personality is immolated at the altar of the Impersonal Absolute. Desire, the "Head" of the Ego, is offered in sacrifice, severed by the Sword of Detachment.

All sins are instantly destroyed. All evil tendencies are burnt. The Jiva attains union with Godhead. It attains what Lord Sri Krishna aptly describes "Mat-Bhava" (My Bhava). The sage- for that is what one becomes the instant after complete, total surrender- is no longer one other than God, with a delusion veiling the Reality; but he is verily He, the Supreme Being Himself, sharing His Bliss and His Power and His Eternal, Infinite Nature.

Chapter Eighteen

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A STHITAPRAJNA

The man who has attained perfection in the Gita-Ethics is rooted in the Consciousness of God. This is the Goal; this is the end of all human endeavours; this is the greatest achievement and the best acquisition.

The Sthitapraina's characteristics are the highest ethical principles which every Sadhaka would do well to adhere to and strive to perfect in himself. The Gita does not recognise failure. Lord Sri Krishna was a supreme optimist He was nothing but divine optimism. Have the ideal of a Sthitaprajna before you. Strive, strive and strive daily to translate it into your own life. Let it take years to take a step towards the Goal, but despair not, march forward, with the greatest assurance of the Lord as your armour: "Never does one who is engaged in righteous endeavour, come to grief." If not in this itself, in the next birth, you might achieve the aim of life and reach the life's Goal.

The greatest characteristic of a Sthitaprajna is desirelessness. He has burnt his desires. What is the fire that burns desires? Elsewhere, Lord Sri Krishna has mentioned it as the Jnana-Agni-the Fire of Knowledge. The realisation that the Self alone is the Reality and that all names and forms are its unreal appearances, and the conviction that all happiness is obtained when the mind, for a brief while, becomes desireless, between the fulfilment of one desire and the rising of another, enables him to drink at the very fountain of Supreme Bliss--in his Self.

What is the touchstone for this desirelessness, so that we may be sure it is there? The total absence of attraction and aversion. Vita-Raga-Bhaya-Krodha, says the Lord. Raga is deluded attraction to objects. Dvesha, the Lord has split into its two component parts - Bhaya and Krodha. Now, a Sthitaprajna is not unduly tempted by pleasurable experiences and does not get attached to them when they present themselves to him; nor is he upset by unpleasant experiences.

He achieves this by dexterously withdrawing his senses from their objects. This comes to him naturally as he has lost all attraction towards them. The Lord gives you a beautiful picture to remember: the tortoise withdrawing its limbs into the shell. The moment the forces of worldliness, of selfishness, of Raga-Desha and the like come to assail him, the Sthitaprajna withdraws himself into his shell of Atma-Jnana, his invulnerable fortress.

This is a feat difficult of achievement. The Lord does not under-rate its difficulty, but gives a practical hint for its achievement. Intelligent self-denial is the method. Do not fulfil your desires; it is foolish to imagine that desires can be controlled by fulfilling them. The tamer of wild animals knows that he cannot bring an elephant, tiger or lion under his control, by sumptuously feeding them. He does not starve them to death, either. The technique for controlling the senses and the mind is exactly the same. By the systematic practice of self-denial, backed up by constant discrimination and enquiry, the Sadhaka will be able to control his senses. But, then, it is

dangerous to relax even when this stage has been reached. If the hold is relaxed and the senses allowed to feed to their satisfac-tion, they would become ferocious once again. Till the Supreme Being is seen, till Self-realisation is achieved and one gets rooted in the Knowledge of the Self, one should be vigilant. For only then do the senses and the mind shed their outgoing nature. Remaining constantly rooted in this Consciousness till the body drops off, at the conclusion of the Prarabdha-Karma that gave birth to it, man attains the Supreme Seat-Brahma-Nirvana. This is the Goal. May you all attain this goal in this very birth! May you shine as Jivanmuktas, Bhagavatas, Yogins, and Para-Bhaktas here and now! May God bless you with health, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya Moksha!

Sri Krishnarpanamastu!

Gita Jayanti Messages

1942

MESSAGE OF THE GITA

Blessed Immortal Souls!

My amiable friends! Many Gita Jayantis have come and gone and yet the darkness of your heart has not disappeared. Become a practical man. Live in the spirit of the teachings of the Gita daily. Aspire fervently. Lead a pure life. Watch the evil Vrittis of the mind carefully and nip them in the bud. Introspect and remove your defects. Cultivate good and sublime thoughts. Do daily virtuous actions. Serve the society with a disinterested spirit. Constantly remember those Slokas of the Gita which will help you daily to lead a virtuous and divine life.

Repeat them daily.

Stick to your Dharma and truthfulness. Do selfless service. Surrender yourself to the Lord. Have equal vision and balanced mind in success and failure, honour and dishonour, heat and cold, pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow. Give the mind to the Lord and hands to the service of humanity. Be established in the vow of Brahmacharya. Give up selfishness, meanness, attachment and egoism. You will free yourself from the wheel of births and deaths, from the bonds of Karma and attain Supreme peace, eternal bliss and immortality. This is the Message of the Gita.

You may know the whole Gita by heart. You may deliver lectures on the Gita for hours together and yet you may not have a ray of the wisdom of the Gita. What is wanted is actual living a life with mental non-attachment following the teachings of the Gita.

Gita gives two Mantras for constant repetition. They are

"OM" in eighth chapter and "OM TAT SAT" in the seventeenth chapter. Live in OM or OM TAT SAT, the symbol of Para Brahman or Para Brahman Itself.

Practise the three vows given in the sixteenth chapter. Develop the virtues that are enumerated in the thirteenth and the sixteenth chapters which are aids for the attainment of the Knowledge of the Self. You may fail several times and fall down but again stand up as a hero and march forward fearlessly in the spiritual path and reach the goal of life.

Srimad Bhagavad Gita is the cream of the Vedas. It is the quintessence of the Upanishads. It is a unique book for all times. The teachings of the Gita are universal and sublime. It has a message for the solace, peace, freedom and perfection of all human beings. Dive deep in the ocean of the Gita, bring out the most precious pearls of Knowledge and attain Immortality.
May the Lord grant you strength to stick to your vows, resolves, truth and Dharma. May you ever abide in Lord Krishna and His precious teachings. May you all become like Arjuna. May the life of Arjuna inspire you all with noble instincts, noble ideals. Glory to Lord Krishna! Glory to the Gita! Glory to Arjuna! Glory to those who follow the valuable teachings of the Gita.

1943

THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Its Importance and Significance

Gita-day or the Birthday of Srimad Bhagavad Gita is celebrated throughout India by all admirers and lovers of this unique book on the 11th day (Ekadasi) of the bright half of the Marga Sirsha month according to the Hindu almanac.
The teachings of the Gita are broad, universal and sublime. Its teachings do not belong to any cult, sect, creed, particular age, place or country. Its teachings are meant for the people of the whole world at large. The teachings are based on the Upanishads, the ancient wisdom of the seers, Rishis and sages. It teaches a method which is within the reach of all. It has a message for the solace, peace, freedom, salvation and perfection of all human beings.
Study of the Gita alone is sufficient for the purpose of daily Svadhyaya. You will find a solution here for all your doubts. The more you study with devotion and faith, the more you will get deeper knowledge, penetrative insight and clear right thinking. Even if you live in the spirit of one Sloka of the Gita, all your miseries will come to an end and you will attain the goal of life Immortality and Eternal Peace.
The Gita is a gospel for the whole world. It is meant for the generality of mankind. It was given about six thousand years ago in the battlefield of Kurukshetra by Lord Krishna to Arjuna.
None but the Lord can bring out such an unprecedented and marvellous book which gives peace to the readers, which helps and guides them in the attainment of Supreme Bliss, which has survived upto this time. This itself proves clearly that God exists, that God is an

embodiment of knowledge and that one can attain perfection or liberation by realising God alone.

Maya flies away from those who are given to the recitation of the names of the Lord, who study the Gita daily and who strive to live in the spirit of the teachings of even one Sloka of the Gita.

Those who are under the influence of Avidya or ignorance always wander in the Samsara.

Those who are given to the practice of introspection, Japa, Kirtan, meditation and study of holy scriptures are always emancipated.

Knowledge of Self reveals itself to those who are the devotees of the Lord and who worship daily. Those who are possessed of devotion are undoubtedly emancipated. Those who are destitute of the nectar of devotion cannot achieve emancipation even in dream.

It is want of proper regularised Sadhana that pulls man down from his stage. It is want of proper precautionary measures that makes him slip down. If you are truly earnest, if your ambition to rise higher and higher in the spiritual ladder is keen, there is no question of fall. For at every step you will look at the height that you have reached, the height that you have yet to climb, and think of the future step to be taken. Kindly do this now. Never allow your leg to slip and bring you down headlong into the low level.

Whatever your work may be, Sadhana must go on as usual, just as you take your food and care for your bodily comfort. If you allow one day to slip off, the bad Vritti will take possession of yourself slowly and drag you down gradually. Do not do Sadhana by fits and starts. Let it be a continuous flow like tailadhara.

Purity is the passport to the land of Eternal Bliss. If you hold this passport, you can reach the yonder land where reign everlasting peace, unalloyed felicity and eternal sunshine.

Seek thou the hidden, inexhaustible treasures of the self within. You will realise that the empire of the whole world, even, the empire of gods is dust before the splendour of knowledge of Self.

Terrible is the bondage of this world. Go beyond mundane lite and live in the eternal. May you through great effort attain the illimitable riches of the Omnipotent soul.

There is no temple more sacred than a purified mind, a mind concentrated on the Lord. Let the tempest blow. When temptations assail you, when the senses hiss and raise their hoods, when desires try to overcome you, when the mind fluctuates, call upon God. Sing His name. Do Japa. Pray fervently. He hears even the sound caused by the fall of a pin or an ant. If you repeat His name you can easily cross this formidable ocean of Samsara. Let your tongue always repeat Lord's Names. Let your ears hear His praises and Lilas. Let the mind concentrate on His Form.

Faith, faith, faith! Everything depends upon faith. Rely on Him alone. He will look after you in every way.

The world is the best training ground and every day gives us a new opportunity to test our spiritual strength. This world will tempt an aspirant even in his Himalayan seclusion. The mind is to be curbed, held tight in your grasp, trained in a new manner, and the problems have to be tackled.

The message of the Gita is the message of sacrifice, love and duty. Love all. Share what you have with others. Do your duties well. Live in the light of the unique teachings of the Gita. Rise above petty likes and dislikes. Live in Lord Krishna, Yogesvara, who is an embodiment of love. Keep open the portals of your heart by removing selfishness, greed, lust so that Lord Krishna may come and dwell therein.

Become like Arjuna,awarriorandkilltheenemieswithinthroughthearrowofdevotion.Lead the Divine Life whileremainingintheworld.StudyconstantlytheGita.Lettheteachingsenter your whole being.Yourwholeattitudetowardslifewillbegraduallychanged.Youwillbecomea God-man with God-vision.Youwillnotbeperturbedbythepairsofopposites.Youwillattain everlasting peace,immortalityandeternalbliss.

Develop the divineattributesthatarementionedinthirteenthandsixteenthchaptersoftheGita. Practise the threekindsofTapasprescribedintheseventeenthchapter.Surrenderthefruitsof your actions to theLord.Giveuptheidea"amdoer."ThinkoftheLordatalltimesandfight, i.e., discharge yourVarnashramadutieswell.Withthemindnotwanderingafteranythingelse, harmonised by constantpractice,constantlymeditating,youwillattaintheSupreme.Thisisthe message of the Gita.

Love is knowledgeindiffusiveexpression.Knowledgeisloveinconcentratedessence.Service is love expressedthroughaction.Love,knowledgeandserviceareequallynecessaryinthe complete settingupofDivineLife.Heart,headandhandmustbeharmoniouslydeveloped. Then only you willattainperfection.TheGitaprescribesmethodstodeveloptheheart,head and hand. The thirteenthchaptertreatsofSadhanathatisbestcalculatedtodeveloptheheart. The third chapterdealswiththemethodstopurifytheheartthroughselflessservice.The eighteenth chaptershowsthewaytoattainknowledge.

May you all liveinthespiritoftheGita'steachings.MaytheGitaguideyouandlightenthe burden of Samsara.MayyouallbecomelikewarriorYogiArjuna!MaytheblessingsofLord Krishna be uponyouall!GlorytotheGita!GlorytoLordKrishna!GlorytovotariesoftheGita!

1944

GITA-THE SOURCE OF POWER

The Bhagavad Gita is the most beautiful and the only truly philosophical song. It contains the sublime lessons of wisdom and philosophy. It is the song Divine. It is a universal gospel. It contains the message of life which appeals to all irrespective of age, race or religion.

The Gita was given about six thousand years ago to Arjuna, an Indian prince, by Sri Krishna. The teachings are based on the Upanishads, the ancient metaphysical classics of India. The Gita shows a way to rise above the world of duality and the pairs of opposites and to attain eternal bliss and Immortality. It is a gospel of action. It teaches a rigid performance of one's duty in society, a life of active, struggle, keeping one's inner being untouched by outer surroundings and renouncing all fruits of action as offerings unto the Lord.

The Gita is the source of power and wisdom. It strengthens you when you are weak and inspires you when you are feeble. It teaches you to embrace Dharma and resist Adharma. Study of the Gita is well calculated to do immense good by enabling you to understand the real meaning and value of life as well as the supreme purpose for which it has to be lived.

It is a matter for great regret that many young men and women of India know very little of this sublime book. You cannot consider yourself as having attained a good education if you have no sound knowledge of the Gita. All post-graduate knowledge, all research knowledge of Universities is mere husk or chaff when compared to the wisdom of the Gita.

Live in the spirit of the teachings of the Gita. Mere talk and lecture will not help you in any way. Become a practical man of the Gita. Remember always the seven Slokas of the Gita (the Sapta Sloki Gita). They are verse 13 of Chapter VIII, verse 36 of Chapter XI, verse 14 of Chapter XI, verse 9 of Chapter VIII, verse 1 of Chapter XV, verse 15 of Chapter XV and verse 34 of Chapter IX. Also remember the Ekasloki Gita (verse 78 of Chapter XVIII). Read the whole Gita on Sundays and other holidays. Study again and again verses 54 to 72 of Chapter II which deals with the nature of a Sthitaprajna (Jivanmukta) and Amritashtaka verses 13 to 20 of Chapter XII.

May you all lead the life taught by the Gita! May the Gita, the blessed Mother of the Vedas, guide you and protect you and nourish you with the milk of the ancient wisdom of the Upanishads! Glory to Sri Krishna, the Teacher, and Sri Vyasa, Krishna Dvaipayana, who composed the Gita, the Poet of poets! May their blessings be upon you all!

Om Peace!

1945

GITA-THE UNIVERSAL SCRIPTURE

The Gita Jayanti is one of the greatest days in the history of mankind. Nearly six thousand years ago this day, a dazzling flash of brilliant lightning lit up the firmament of human civilisation. This spiritual effulgence, this flash is the message of the Gita given by the Lord Himself at Kurukshetra. Unlike ordinary lightning which dies away immediately after flashing in the split of a second, this brilliant flash of that memorable day continued to shine through the centuries and even now it illuminates the path of humanity on its onward march to perfection

The greatest gifts, the best blessing that India has conferred upon the world, upon all humanity is this sublime yet eminently practical Universal gospel of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

The greatest thinkers and philosophers of the Occident have vied with one another in paying their devout tribute at the shrine of the Gita. Holding a unique position in the sacred literature of the world, standing unrivalled through the ages as a practical gospel of Divine living, recognised on all sides as a Universal scripture par-excellence, the Gita has today come to be the strength and solace, the constant companion and comforter, the guide, friend and philosopher, of a vast section.

The secret of its universal appeal and acceptance lies in the fact that the Gita does not exclude any being from receiving its message and becoming blessed. It is entirely unsectarian and is pre-eminently a practical gospel. It is meant for you, for me and for every man living his ordinary life in the busy everyday world. It has a workable message and method of attaining Bliss and Perfection to suit every kind of temperament containing as it does the exposition of Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Yoga.

The Gita is the gist and quintessence of all the Vedas and the Scriptures. Wilhelm Von Humboldt, the famous occidental scholar says, the "Bhagavad Gita is the deepest and sublimest production the world possesses." Ask. You shall be given. Seek. You shall find. Knock. It shall be open to you. This is the Seek posed quality of this scripture. You obtain access at one stroke to the entire range of wisdom, human and Divine.

The Gospel of the Gita is at once a rousing and inspiring gospel that throws a flood of light upon the most vexing problems of life, lights up with bright rays of hope and assurance the dark corners of gloom, despondency and despair, raising the reader at once from weakness to strength, from diffidence to robust confidence in his own infinite powers and imperishable nature.

The bold clarion note of the second chapter hammering into a despairing soul the idea of its essentially imperishable and indestructible nature forms an eternal inspiring message of courage and hope to all mankind "Behold" says the Gita to every man. "Thou art not this perishable physical frame. Thou art soul, art pure spirit Immortal, invulnerable, immutable,

perpetual, all-pervasive, stable." And subsequently the gospel of the Gita proceeds to teach in masterly fashion various methods to arrive at the realisation of this glorious Truth.

It has the heartening message that to realise His Divinity, His immortal nature man is not required to become a recluse breaking off from family and friends and holding far from the society, that union with the Divine Self may be achieved and maintained even in the midst of worldly work and activities that the obstacles to this blissful union lies within us and not in external environment, is the central lesson of this unique and blessed book.

To live means to fight; for all this is a battle whose battlefield is each person's heart wherein the forces of good and evil, the Divine and the demoniacal, purity and passion are ceaselessly at war. The Gita symbolises the solution of the eternal struggle between the Spiritual and material in every human being. Life is activity and none can escape either from action or rein of duty. Therefore, wherever he be, man has 10 somehow attain his goal in and through activity. Seek to secure a victory of peace and true surrender in the midst of activity rather than craving for a state of external renunciation of activity. This becomes possible only when you establish yourself in the truth that you are merely an instrument in the hands of the Divine Indwelling in you. Unattached work, without idea of agency and without desiting for the fruits of action becomes Yogic activity. Then all your acts are divinised and works cease to bind you any longer.

To efface the ego and achieve non-attachment strive to rise above petty likes and dislikes; do not be swayed by desires and aversions; remain unaffected by little pleasures and pains, hopes and disappointments.

Cease to swing between extremes of the pairs of opposites. Be balanced in everything. Follow the golden means. These are the golden precepts of the Gita.

Lead the Divine Life while remaining in the world. Study the Gita constantly. Root out the three evils of lust, anger and greed. These are the very triple gates to darkness. Come out victorious over the pairs of opposites by recognising their evanescent nature and asserting your Divinity. Let the teaching of the Gita enter your whole being. Your entire attitude towards life will become changed. You will become a God-man with God-vision. You will no more be perturbed by success or failure, pleasure or pain, loss or gain. You will attain courage, strength, peace and bliss in this very life right where you are.

Develop Divine virtues. Dedicate all your actions to the Lord. Care not for their fruits. Think of the Lord at all times and light the battle of life by doing your duties well. Come out of finite self. Love and serve all. You will attain the Supreme goal of life.

Glory to the Gita! Glory to Gitacharya!!

1946

PHILOSOPHY OF THE GITA

The Gita is the voice of God. It is the song of ancient wisdom. It is a greatest text-book of spiritual culture. The Gita's message is the message of action, love, service, sacrifice. It contains the essence of Hinduism.

The Gita is a synthesis of religion and ethics. The Gita is a synthesis of all Yogas. The Gita is an Upanishad, a Brahma Vidya, a Yoga Sastra, a Samvada, the science of the Self. It is the crest-jewel of Mahabharata. The Gita is the best balm to heal the wounds of the world.

The Gita is a universal gospel, which appeals to all irrespective of age, race or religion. It has a universality which embraces every aspect of human action, which suits and elevates every stage of human development. That is the reason why tributes to the Gita have been paid by eminent scholars of Asia, Europe and America. Emerson, the great sage of America had a copy of Gita always on his table.

*The Gita does not want you to flee from worldly career to the solitude of forests. It does not bid you to hide in a cave of the Himalayas for attaining the Supreme peace of the Eternal.The Gita tells you to resist Adharma, to develop the divine virtues, which will help you to attain God-consciousness and to try to attain Self-realisation in and through the world.

The Gita gives you practical lessons to regulate your daily life and conduct. Duty for duty's sake, action without attachment and expectation of fruits, a life of discipline, regular meditation, self-surrender, and sacrifice, practice of non-injury, truthfulness and purity, cultivation of Daivi-sampat and universal love, enquiry into the nature of Supreme Self, the Reality behind these names and forms and constant endeavour to identify yourself with the all-pervading Consciousness or the Immortal Soul--these are the lessons of the Gita for individuals and the nations alike.O man! You have been spoiled by false and wrong education! God can neither be examined in a glass retort in the laboratory of a scientist nor cut open by the surgeon's knife. No one can prove God by logic. You cannot meet God without Bhakti. You take pride through your boasted intellect that you have proved that God does not exist. You take pride that you are Godless. What a vain Godless man you are! You have lived in vain, you have wasted your life. Open your eyes! Wake up from your long slumber of ignorance now. Take refuge in the Gita and the Gita's Lord, Sri Krishna. Still there is hope for you. He is all-merciful. He will bless you. Study the Gita daily and live in the spirit of the Gita. You will soon attain eternal bliss and immortality.

May Lord Krishna, the Joy of Devaki, the flute-bearer of Brindavan, the Supreme Guru of the world, bless you all! OM TAT SAT.

1947

CALL OF THE SUPREME

Blessed Immortal Selves! My message to you all on this most memorable occasion of the Gita Jayanti is- recall again the lofty message of the great scripture, hearken to the voice of the blessed Lord, strive to live each moment of your life in the spirit of the Gita Sandesa. Seek to mould yourselves on the ideal presented in verse 4 of the twelfth chapter which says: 'Samniyamyendriyagramam Sarvatra Samabuddhayah.. ...Sarvabhutahite Ratah' Restrain your senses perfectly, have equal vision, be ever intent on the welfare and happiness of all creatures. The Gita is not merely a book, it is not a mere scripture. It is a living voice carrying an eternally vital and indispensable message to mankind. Its verses embody words of wisdom, coming from the Infinite Ocean of Knowledge-Absolute itself. The voice of the Gita is the Call of the Supreme. It is a Divine Sound explained. The mightiest primal Source of all existence, all power is the manifest sound symbol OM. It is the Divine Word or the Sabda. It is the Nada-Brahman whose unceasing call, eternal message, is "Be ye all ever merged in the eternal unbroken continuous consciousness of the supreme truth." This is the sublime message that the great Gita elaborates and presents in all comprehensive and universally accepted form. It is verily this message of the Bhagavad Gita that wish to recall and reproclaim with emphasis to you on this great day. To be always conscious of the Divine, to feel always the Divine presence, to live always in the awareness of the Supreme being, in the Chambers of your heart and everywhere around you, is verily to live a life of fullness and Divine Perfection, even while upon earth. Such Smaran and such Bhav will release you for ever from the clutches of Maya and free you from all fear. To forget the supreme is to fall into Maya. To forget him is to be assailed by fear. To live in unbroken remembrance of the Supreme Truth is to remain always in the region of Light, far beyond Maya's reach. Feel always that Flame burning brightly within your own Self. See that Light shining through every form and face. Learn to recognise the unmistakable Presence behind every phenomenon. One who lives this way never strays away from the Right, from Dharma. He never loses sight of the Truth. He never falls into darkness. Such a one never utters falsehood, for he knows the Lord as the Antaryamin dwelling in the inner-most recess of his being. He never commits sin, for nothing can be hidden from the all-pervading Lord. He ever

does his dutyheroicallyandcourageously,knowingthattherealdoerisindeedtheLordwho impels him toactuponthisearthlystage.
Mark carefullyhowtheGitaagainandagainstressesuponthisloftymessage.TheLord declares, "MayyevaManaAadhatsvaMayiBuddhimNiveshaya"-(Chap.XII-8).KeepThouthy mind (fixed) inMe,inMeplacethyreason,too.Thenagain"TasmatSarveshuKaleshu Mamanusmara Yuddhyacha; Mayyarpitamanobuddhih Maamevaishyasyasamsayam." Therefore, at all times remember Me alone and fight. With mind and intellectfixed(orabsorbed)inMe,thoushaltdoubtlesslycomeuntoMealone(Chap.VIII-7). "YogasthahKuruKarmaniSangamTyaktvaDhananjaya."OArjuna,performaction remaining united with Me in heart, mind and soul (Chap. I|-48). The Gita guides you to glory with the watchword"ManmanaBhava.""Matpara.""Matchitta."TheBhagavanbestowsthefollowing definite assurance through the Bhagavad Gita, "Teshamaham Samuddharta… Mayyavesitachetasaam (Chap. XI-7). I become the Saviour from mortal Samsara for them whose minds are set on Me.
Such is the most illuminating message of the Gita, seeking to lead Mankind to a life of Perfection even while performing the pre-ordained role. Long has this message been neglected by man.ForgettingtheLordtheworldhasturnedtowardsSense-indulgenceandmammon. Terrible price has been paid.
Enough of this forgetfulness; for, the Lord has amply warned man against heedlessness: "Atha Chettvamahankarat Na Shroshyasi Vinankshyasi- If out of egoism thou will not hear, then thou shalt perish utterly. (Chap. XVIII-58)

My message on this memorable day is: "Hearken to this message of the Gita. Rise in response to the Divine Call of the Lord. Steep yourself in the sublime wisdom of the Gita daily. Reflect upon the great lessons conveyed through it. Live in the spirit of the Gita. Try to feel and realise the Truth now and here. When in doubt go through the monumental works like the Jnaneswari of Sri Jnanadev, the classic commentary of Sankara and the like. Or again, follow the example of living saints and sages, men of God who are verily embodiments of the Gita ideal.
May the blessed Lord, the giver of the Gita, from whose Divine Lips flowed forth this life-giving stream of profound wisdom, this day, centuries ago, shower His Grace and infuse you with strength and power to mould your lives on the Gita ideal! May you all be inspired this day to strive to live in the spirit of the Gita!

1948

ASCRIPTURE FOR ALL

For anything to appeal to man more than other things of similar nature any particular deity, religion, name there should be some peculiar, unique, inherent worth in it, which causes this attraction. There have been scriptures in all religions and in every religion some book has come to have a distinctive appeal, a treasure of some special value. The immortal work of that great devotee, Thomas A. Kempes, has come to be regarded as a universal scripture. Even so, amidst so many books of the Buddhist religion "Dhammapada". The Gita occupies such a towering place above all great scriptures; and a little reflection will show how untold treasures are there which go to make it a gem to all Bhaktas.

Nowadays the whole of India is becoming the Gita minded. There are great scriptures: the Upanishads, the Bhagavata, the Ramayana, they are kept by the orthodox people and read with great interest and devotion by great number of people. All the Hindus keep these books for occasional reading. But this little book of 700 verses is a constant companion finding a place in the pocket of every man, however busy he may be. How is it that the Gita has become enshrined in the hearts of all? Most of these great scriptures are as revelations or as expositions. They analyse, reveal, and act as expositions to the nature of the ultimate Reality. The Gita embodies in itself a solution, more than an exposition or a revelation, more than a solution to the metaphysical Problem, to the immediately pressing problems of man. The Gita is the compassion of the Lord who has come down from his lofty seat to the earth plane to wipe the tears of those in sorrow, to give encouragement to those in despair and to give a definite promise to those who are eagerly looking up to some saving power. The Gita embodies in itself a solution to the problems of life and carries a wonderful message of encouragement, hope, consolation, cheer and also a definite promise. Thus it has come to be impressed on all mankind for this supreme utility.

Man clings to the Gita instinctively; this is only due to the fact that it embodies the solution to all problems. A man who is in affluent circumstances will not worry about the question of economy, will not seek after books that deal with the way to wealth. The Gita deals with the problem of life itself; therefore, every man has got this problem. There is no exception; every man has got the problem of life and death. The Gita gives a message to the man in misery; the Lord says, "Grief is out of delusion, I shall show you the way out of it." Grief comes out of your being too susceptible to the play, of the dualities, whereas in reality you are a witness to the states. These are three qualities in the field of Prakriti. You are but a witness, unaffected by these dualities. That is the pressing problem how to escape sorrow. The Lord gave various methods: Fear is

there hauntingmankindasaspectre.TheLord,withinafewbeautifulandsweetsentences once foralldemolishesthisterriblefearwhichhauntsmankind.
Death isnothing.Itistheconceptionofdeathwhichhauntsyou.Astherearechangesinyour body-childhood, youth, etc death is but a natural stage of passing from one receptacle to another. Once man becomes convinced of the nature of death, that death is not an annihilation or destruction,butonlyachange,awonderfulstrengthisinfusedinus.Thisdistinctionofthe body inrealityisonlylikeanordinarychangeofthefourseasonsinthesameyear.This assurance that death is nothing but a mere change, gives a great fearlessness, and for this method of attaining to that stage-for the solution of the problem of death, mankind has to be eternally grateful to the Gita.
The Gita does not ask man to do anything which will be impossible for any of the average capacity to do. Lord says, "Even a little of this knowledge is enough to take you away from the great fear. Practise a little of it, then you will see how it will over come all the terrors of Samsara. I ampleasedevenwithalittlethatyoudo;onlydoitwithaproperBhav.Idonotwantyouto undertake gigantic processes. I want Bhav; I want the heart. Whatever is easily possible for you, find out, and do that. I shall fulfil it; fulfilment is in my hand." "Patram pushpam". "That Bhav itself I shall transform."
When the Lord was to be weighed, when all the wealth of the three worlds would not be of any avail, a little Tulasidala put into the other pan at once did the trick which all other gold, silver and ornaments were not able to do.
"I giveyouthisassuranceonceyoutaketotherightpath,Ishallcomerunningtoyouandtake you alongthepath,"theLordsays.Cantherebeanygreatermessage..."AslongasIamhere to upliftyouthereisnofear.""Ishallrelieveyoufromallsins."Hegivesasupremecommand, "Fear not!" Even with a little practice this wonderful scripture invigorates the despairing man giving him a positive promise of salvation, makes him fearless. Therein lies the supreme value of theGita.Itisasolutionanditembodiesamessageoftruth,fearlessnessand encouragement. The practice that we are asked to do is not impossible. It is a direct appeal for divinisation of life.
Our lowernaturecanbecharacterizedasimpuredesire,theinherentqualitiesofanger,Krodha, Kama andLobha.Thesethreeareinman,inhislowernature.TheGitaisadirectappealtoget rid of thesethreeanddivinisetheentirenatureofman.Giveupthesethreebygivingupall association… "Sangat.. " These three fundamental evil qualities manifest themselves as various Asuric qualitiesthatdragmandownwards.AcquireDaiviSampat;bydoingsoyouwillbeable to get over these.ThatissomewhatparalleltothecreedwhichtheDivineLifeMovementhas begun to broadcast...thesameasMahatmaGandhi's...thatistosticktoAhimsa,Satyamand Brahmacharya. By following these three triple virtue, you will be able to annihilate the three outstanding evilswhichkeepyoudownandthustakingthemessageasembodiedintheGita try even little bylittlefromnowon,trytobecomeimagesofthemessageoftheGitaandattain the final beatitudeaspromisedbytheGitacharyaBhagavanSriKrishna!MaythatSupreme Lord, the authoroftheGitabestowuponyouallthefinalemancipationfromthetrammelsof births and deaths!MayyouallshinelikedynamicYoginsandattaintheParama-dhama,the abode of Immortality,eternalblissandsupremepeace,treadingthepathoftheGita!

1948

YOGA OF SYNTHESIS

Salutations to Satchidananda Para Brahman who, through His Maya took a birth in this world for the sake of the uplift of his children! Salutations to Arjuna, Vyasa and the great Teachers who are responsible for preserving that Message which Lord Krishna delivered thousands of years ago!

Gita is an inexhaustible ocean of ever-fresh nectar. Every time you dive in it you experience an altogether new thrill, a new refreshing vigour and strength to face Life without illusion.

In the clearest terms the Lord Himself says that this world which is the product of Maya is Anitya (non-eternal or transitory) and Asukha (unpleasant). And, "Having obtained a birth in this transitory world of miseries, devote yourself to Me!" says He. Again, He emphasises that His own Maya who is of the form of the Gunas is difficult to transcend; and in the same breath offers the only boat to cross this ocean-Prapatti or total self-surrender.

What sort of a devotion does He lay down?

Wherever I turn, in the Gita I find a Synthesis, never a one-sided exclusiveness.

"Manmana"- In this one word the Lord has hinted at the importance of Raja Yoga, or the Yoga of Patanjali. Fill the mind with the Lord! Annihilate the Vishayakara Vritti and raise the Brahmakara Vritti. It is only when the mind is tormented by the Vishayakara Vrittis that man loses his balance of mind; the blissful equanimous state of the mind is disturbed by violent oscillation of the mind. Misery, in truth, is only this loss of mental equilibrium. When these Vrittis are annihilated and the mind becomes one mass of consciousness where the Lord alone is, there is an end of the miseries to which man is subject.

Then comes Para Bhakti which is, according to Sri Sankaracharya, the quest of one's own Self. This results in due time in the perception of one's own self within and without "Madbhaktah!" The Sadhaka has filled his mind with the Lord. Now by becoming His Bhakta, he sees Him alone everywhere! He realises the cosmic Consciousness. This dynamic Jana Sadhana makes the Sadhaka fearless, and free from delusion.

What does one do who has seen the Lord Or the Self alone everywhere inside and outside? Does he merely satisfy himself with this experience? No: for, elsewhere the Lord has characterised such realised soul as "Sarvabhutahiteratah® (keenly interested in the welfare of all souls). Karma Yoga is, therefore, brought into this Rajayoga-Jnanayoga combination.

"Madyajee" Perform all your actions for His sake. Offer all the actions and their fruits at His Lotus-Feet as an act of sacrifice. Work as His instrument. Abandon egoism. Embrace humility. Know that it is His Sakti alone that works through you. For, when the Lord withdraws that Sakti from you, what remains is food for jackals and vultures! Glory to the Lord who carries on His own Lila through His own manifestations! istol Then, comes

"Mam Namaskuru-prostrateuntoMe!'Prostrationdoes not only mean mechanically falling flat on the ground;theoutwardprostrationisonlyasymbol which ought to rouse up in the mind of the Sadhakaalongingtodototalandunreservedself-surrender-Atma-Nivedana-totheLord. It is through thistotalself-surrenderthataBhaktaenjoys the Madhurya-Rasa (or the Nectar of Divine Love)!

In this self-surrenderalonethereisPeace!InthisAtma-Nivedana alone is Joy, Bliss, Immortality and Eternal Life!

It is such aSadhakawhocombinesinthecourseof Sadhana which he undertakes the Four Main Paths-RalaYoga,JanaYoga,KarmaYogaand Bhakti Yoga- that progresses by leaps and boundsandreachestheLordsoon"Mamevaishyasi- -You reach Me alone!"

Then alonewilltheSadhakaendeavourthus,when He has set for himself the Supreme Goal of God-realisation.

"Matparayanah."Luckily,theverysoilofIndiaisladen with be dust of the Lotus-Feet of the Lord Himselfand HisinnumerableMessengerswhohave from time to time awakened in the Indian soil a love forHisownculture.Hardlyhasonegeneration in India been without its spiritual culture. HardlyhasonegenerationinIndiabeenwithout its spiritual leaders: and in the comity of Nations, IndiahasalwaysactedtheroleoftheSpiritual Preceptor broadcasting the Message of Selfless ServiceandUniversalLovethroughoutthe world.

O childrenofBharatavarsha!Awake!Heartheclarion call of the Lord! Listen to His Sankha-Nada! Fromtheveryinnerchambersofyourownheart, He will re-deliver to you the Message of the Gita. Withthatasyourbanner,conquertheworld through Love and Service!

1949

THE ANCIENT GOSPEL TO MODERN MANKIND

The Bhagavad Gita is an ancient solution of the modern problems too. The problems that face the human beings are essentially the same in all periods of time, though they appear in different dresses at different times. The greatness of the Gita lies in that it is an integral gospel, a solution of all problems in all their aspects, at all times, in all places and under all circumstances. The Gita was pronounced by the integral person, Sri Krishna, who represented the true Being; the Gita was meant to be an instruction to Arjuna, who represented the true man!

The problems that faced Arjuna face mankind in general; the Gita is the answer to the universal question of life as a whole.

Social problems, political problems, and individual problems, relating to the different conditions of life, physical, intellectual and spiritual, are all offshoots of certain fundamental difficulties which appear to make existence a scene of acute restlessness and grief. Peace, abundance and happiness seem to be the factors which control the value of life; the lack of these becomes the source of a severe want and a problem; the continuous presence of these seems to overcome all forms or sorrow. The basic error which the Gita points out that man has committed is the absence of the knowledge of the main cause of all kinds of problems that obstruct the establishment of oneself in non-intermittent, ceaseless satisfaction. The various categories of the constitution of the universe enumerated by the Gita point to the fact that the Soul of the universe is not what is perceived by man through his senses or thought of by his mind, but the presupposition of conception, perception and all knowledge which man professes to generate or possess. The God of the universe is the heart thereof, the Transcendental Subject without an object, which means that problems and difficulties arise in objectivating the true Subject, the God within man, i.e. in being untrue to one's real Self. In order to know the world fully, the knower must be independent of the laws governing the world; else, knowledge complete would be impossible. One whose knowledge is controlled by external phenomena can never have knowledge of them. The impulse for absolute knowledge guarantees the possibility of such a knowledge. This shows that the knower is superior to the known to such an extent that the known loses its value of being in the light of the absoluteness of the knower. The Bhagavad Gita stresses on the existence of this state of the Supreme Being to the exclusion of everything else, in the statement "other than Me,
nothing is."

To try to find absolute perfection in the world, therefore, is to attempt the impossible; for, that is possible only in "attaining Me" (in the words of Lord Krishna), in attaining, or, rather, in being the absolute knower whose knowledge is not of anything except himself. To become Krishna is to become the Absolute Being, where alone is perpetual peace, abundance and happiness in

unalloyed essence. The satisfaction found in the world is the mind of the knower seen through the mirrorofobjectivity;itistheperceptionofone'sideainconcreteobjectiveforms,thoughthe basis of such forms is the absolute Self or the universal Soul. The repeated assertions made in the Gitatotheeffectthatdoubts,problemsandworriesareovercomeintheattainmentofGod, make it clear--that, because knowledge of God, or attainment of God means being God, the riddle of life in the universe with its unsurmountable vexations and annoying experiences can be finally solved on arriving at the knowledge that the fundamental error is the attribution of reality and selfhood to thought-forms and that true perfection is being rooted in the consciousness of Absolute Selfhood.

The modern man opines himself to be scientific and strictly rational. The Bhagavad Gita warns man that science and rational knowledge are simply laws and knowledge of the forms of external experience which by no means are valid by themselves. They are valid only in so far as they are related to an experiencing phenomenal subject, but they are invalid to noumenal subject which is the heart of even the perceived or the known forms of experience. Experience is notpriorbutposteriortoSelf-consciousness;henceallexperienceintheworldistheoutcome of theideasgivenrisebyconsciousnessinthecapacityoftheknowingsubjectwhichit essentially is. The phenomenon should vanish in the Nomenon which is the Root-existence. Until this is achieved, no problem can be solved, no pain can be alloyed. The great modern problems are a trifle to the wisdom of the Gita which considers worldly wisdom as fool's paradise.

The wayoflifetobelivedinordertoreachabsoluteperfectionispointedoutbytheethicsofthe Gita itself.Itisthecalmingofthepassions,creativewilling,thecessationofallpsychic functions, that leads to a merging in Self-consciousness, where alone is the freedom from the oppression of life in a multifarious universe, where alone is thorough and unlimited perfection, and whichaloneisrealknowledge,truewisdom.Theworldisthespecialmodeofthe conception and the perception of the Absolute by the functions of ideation or creative imagining. The cessationofsuchfunctionsisliberationfromallproblemsandpossessionofandlifein infinite peace.ThisisthesupremewordoftheGitatoall.

May you all attainthefreedomwhichknowsnoboundsandrestinpeace!

1950

THE YOGA OF THE GITA

salutations to Lord Sri Krishna, the Supreme Brahman, who Paritranaya sadhunaam vinasaya cha dushkritam Dharmasamsthapanarthaya incarnated Himself in this world of ours.

People have often asked me for a succint analysis of the Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita. I would say it is: "Work is Worship: dedicate it to God." Work, not because you wish to work or to achieve something (for, then, you would fall under the category Ahamkaravimoodhatma kartaaham iti manyate: nor even because there is something intrinsically glorious in the work itself (for, Kaaryate hyavasah karma sarah prakritijair gunaih activity is inevitable here!); but because we shall, through such work express the Will of the Lord. Even when Lord Krishna commanded Arjuna: "Tasmaat uddyasva Bharata," it was not as though He wanted Arjuna to kill, to engage himself in violent deeds, but He wanted Arjuna to do His Will.

"Yadahankaaramasritya na yotsya iti manyse; Mithyaisha vyavasayaste prakritistvam niyokshyati. My Sakti will compel you to fight; therefore, fight." Neither action nor inaction, which has egoism as its prime mover is right action. "Nimittahmaatram Bhava: Be thou My instrument. O Arjuna!" says the Lord.

In a nutshell the Lord Himself has given the secret of Gita-Yoga. "Yasya sarve samarambhah kamasankalpavarjitah; Jhanagnidagdhakarmaanam tam-ahuh panditam budhah": Desireless action and motiveless service performed with the inner conviction "Naiva kinchat karomi__I am not the doer; He does everything, I am only His instrument." This Knowledge burns up the seeds of actions, the seeds that produce the fruits in relation to the Jiva, the fruits that bind the Jiva to Samsara. In this state, when one performs actions in accordance with the teachings of the Gita, "Tyaktva karmaphalasangam nityatripto nirasrayah; Karmanyabhipravritto'pi naiva kinchit karoti sah'-even though he is ever engaged in action, he does nothing, that is he is never attached to action, and therefore he is liberated even here.

That is the secret! One who performs actions incessantly, if he is at heart unattached to either the actions or their fruits he does nothing; on the other hand, he who sits idle, without apparently doing any action, but whose mind ever dwells on the objects and not in the Inner Witness, the Lord calls him a hypocrite; even though he does nothing, he is bound!

Karmendriyani samyamya yaastemanasa smaran;
Indriyaarthan vimudhatma mithyacharah sa uchyate.
Yastvindriyani manasa niyamyarabhate' rjuna;

Karmendriyaih karmayogamasaktahsa visishyate.

Thus during the course of His elaborate discourse to Arjuna the Lord solved His own riddle:

Karmanyakarmayahpayedakarmanichakarmayah;

Sa buddhiman manushyeshu sa yuktah kritsnakarmakrit. and explained in detail the secret of action-in-inaction and inaction-in-action. Indeed Ghana karmano gatih and none except the Lord Himself could have explained this.

How would one who has understood the Gita-Yoga act?

He would say as Arjuna said at the conclusion of the Gita Discourse, "Karishye vachanam tava-| shall do Thy will." Even so, does the Sun-God who received this Gita-Knowledge direct from the Lord. From Anadi-Kala till today, the Sun is carrying on His daily duty, in strict accordance with the Will of the Lord.

Those who similarly, are rooted in the Gita-Yoga are indeed God-men.

May you all, through the Grace of the Lord and the Gita Acharyas, live in the spirit of the Gita and attain the Gita-Ideal of Karma Yoga. May His blessings be upon you all. May the following verse be ever enshrined in your hearts:

Manmana bhava madbhakto madyajee mam namaskuru;
Mamevaishyasi yuktvaivamatmanam matparayanah.

1951

LIVE IN THE SPIRIT OF THE GITA

Blessed Immortal Self! Salutations and Prostrations to the Supreme Parabrahman Who in His Poornavatara as Lord Sri Krishna delivered unto Sri Arjuna the Immortal Gita; and to Sri Vasa who for the benefit of the future of mankind recorded it!

In the field of Kurukshetra, more than six thousand years ago, the Lord delivered this Divine Message of His at a time when Sri Arjuna was confronted with conflicting ideas. The Message of the Gita cleared his mind of all doubts and gave him inner spiritual strength to combat the opposing forces of Adharma and made him victorious in the end.

The Message of the Gita holds good for all time. It is the Divine Guide that leads one to perfection. It is the quintessence of the Vedas, the Upanishads and other Scriptures. It helps those, who cannot understand the Vedas and the Upanishads to clearly understand the sublime teachings of the Scriptures and to attain Perfection.

To the present-day world it is the need of the hour. Living amidst artificial surroundings in this age of scientific advancement, man repeatedly errs and finds himself in the clutches of Maya even though with every breath he is awakened spiritually by the Sages and Seers. The teachings of the Gita alone can save him from being lured to destruction by Maya.

The Gita is the Gospel to the modern mankind. It alone can shape well the future of humanity. The more the Gita is popularised in the present-day world the greater and more definite are the chances of establishing the Kingdom of God, of Peace, of Love.

Nectar's Children! Every year you have met to celebrate the Gita Jayanti with all reverence and devotion to the Supreme. External celebrations are but an aid to internal celebrations. You should celebrate the Gita Jayanti within you, internally. There lies Real Peace and Happiness. There is a war going within you between the Divine and the undivine forces and it is this war that makes your mind restless, that fills your mind with confusion and chaos. It places your mind in a perplexed position like that of Sri Arjuna in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Your mind is Arjuna. The forces of Pandavas and Kauravas are within you in the form of Divine and Asuric forces.

Lord Sri Krishna, too, is within you in the form of Pure Intellect. Just as Arjuna listened to the Lord, forgetting for the time being all chaos within his mind, so also you should, forgetting all your troubles and tribulations, still the mind and make it listen to the Pure Intellect, Lord Sri Krishna within. Everyone of you can then hear the eighteen chapters of the Gita from within. Everyone of you can then fully understand the lofty and sublime teachings of the Vedas and the Upanishads. Everyone of you can enjoy Infinite Peace and Eternal Bliss.

Children of the Almighty Lord! Take to the study of the Gita. Understanding aright even a single Sloka of the Gita in full is the true celebration of the Gita Jayanti. The best way of worshipping

Lord Sri Krishna for havingdelivered this Song Celestial is to follow His Teachings contained in It. Practise Nishkama KarmaYogaas enunciated in the Gita. It is the best means to attain purity of heart, mind and soul. Dototalself-surrender unto His Lotus-Feet. He is always ready to welcome you with the NectarofImmortal Bliss. Lord Sri Krishna resides within all. Serve Him, adore Him and love HimWhoispresent in all. Control the senses. Still the mind. Concentrate upon some Slokas or themeofthe Gita. Be sincere. Be earnest. The Truth will dawn in your mind. You will have Illumination.You will attain Perfection. You can enjoy the sweet Nectar of Immortal Bliss. Infinite Peace,Eternal Bliss and Immortality are all yours. May Lord Sri Krishna blessyouall with health, happiness, long life, peace, prosperity and Kaivalya! May you celebratetheGita Jayanti by living according to its teachings! Om Santi! Om Santi! Om Santi!

1952

GITA: THE GUIDING LIGHT

Worship Srimad Bhagavad Gita as a Holy scripture. Study a chapter from it daily. But, stop not with that. For, the Gita is the king among sciences. It is easy to practise. It is your guiding light. It is Wisdom-Nectar. Enshrine the Gita in your heart. Mix it in your blood and mingle it with your breath. Let the Gita guide your thoughts, prompt your speech and rule your actions.

Then, the Gita will bless you with Supreme Bliss, Infinite Immortal Life and Perfect Peace. That is the greatest prize you have to win, by practising the Gita! It will make you desire for nothing else. So long as you run after the little sense-pleasures, you will not even know what this Supreme satisfaction is. Vihaya Kaman yah Sarvaan Puman Charati Nispruhah; Nirmamo Nirahankarah Sa Santim Adhigachhati. Remember this always. Become free from egoism, mineness and desires. Then, even the greatest calamities will not affect you in the least. This is the prize that the Lord places before you.

Come. Gird up your loins. Strive to obtain this prize. But, how? The Lord gives you practical, wholesome guidance. You have to work and work ceaselessly till you get this prize. Do not waste a single moment. Be vigilant. Guard yourself against Maya. Cultivate dynamic Vairagya. The Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita is an art! You should be ever active; and at the same time you should inwardly feel that you are Akarta (non-doer) and Abhokta (non-enjoyer)! You should take a deep interest in everything: and yet you should be perfectly unattached.

Like a lotus-leaf in water, you should remain at work. Feel that the Lord's Supreme Power does everything here; we are all His instruments. Let your hands be ever engaged in the service of the Lord in all. Let your mind be ever thinking of His Glories. Let your intellect discriminate aright; and, your Soul be Gre in union with the Lord. That is Yoga. A Yogi is not an idle dreamer, an inert stone. Building castles in the air is not the Yoga the Lord asks us to practise. The Lord of the entire universe, He Himself was ever busy in "service" to set an example to us all to illustrate His own Divine Teachings. Beloved aspirants! Give up delusion. Plunge in service.

Be regular in your morning meditation. You will understand what it is to be in tune with the Infinite. You will know what is Atma-Sukha, the Bliss of the Self. Mark well the peace and the bliss that meditation gives you. This peace and this bliss you should enjoy throughout the day even in the midst of the intense activity. The Lord you saw in your heart during the morning meditation you should see in all faces during your day's activities. That is Yoga. That is the Highest Prize.

The Lord who is seated in your own heart, as the very Life of your life, pervades the entire universe as the Soul of everything. Therefore, serve all, so that this realisation will enter every cell of your being. Nothing exists but He (Vasudevah Sarvam)! Love all so that you might become One with Him in that Supreme Devotion (Para Bhakti).

Abandon all thoughts of yourbody, mind and senses.
Take refuge in That SupremeCosmic Being. He will liberate you here and now. Fear not.
Let your mind ever dwell uponHim; see Him alone in everything. Be devoted to Him alone, know that you love Him in all.Serve the Lord in all. Bow to that Almighty Lord who pervades every creature in the universe.You are freed from fear and grief, misery and sorrow, now. You will undoubtedly reach. Himinthis very birth. You will become a Jivanmukta here and now.
May the blessings of Lord SriKrishna be upon you all! May you all shine as Sthitaprajnas in this very birth!

1953

PLENITUDE: THE LAW OF LIFE

Children of Light!
Peace be to you all! May the divine light illumine your efforts and may success attend upon your aspirations for Truth!
The Bhagavad Gita is a sermon on the nature of Truth and on the characteristic of the aspirations and efforts that lead to the experience of Truth. Truly it is said to be the cream of the Upanishads, and is itself termed as the Upanishad. It is a gospel of the science of Reality, the art of Yoga, the philosophy of life, the religion of man. In it is summed up the great teaching on the process of the return of man to God, the sinking of the part in the Whole, the expansion of the individual into the Plenum of Wisdom and Felicity, the Bliss that is undying. Lord Sri Krishna uttered it, and Sri Vyasa wrote it--what a grand combination! Two direct representatives of the highest spiritual realisation and experience have joined their spirits in it! Knowledge and Power coalesce and eternal beatitude becomes the result. To attain this man has to first be burnished, and for this he has to pass through the fire of Yoga.
Lord Sri Krishna, the Yogi par excellence, gives out the scripture of the Yogi, the kingly secret, Brahma-Vidya. "When one sees the separate existence of all beings as rooted in the One, and spreading from That alone, he, then, becomes Brahman" (XII. 30). The whole technique of the practice of Yoga, of spiritual effort, is given here. It is not what one does with one's body, but what one thinks and feels with one's internal conscious instruments that determines the character of an individual. Physical action becomes the spontaneous expression of the cosmic vibration which throbs and pulsates in all beings, When the rootedness of the variety of manifestation in the General Ground Imperishable is directly recognised in non-mediate Intuitional experience. Contradiction, discrepancy, error, ugliness, disharmony and such flagrant presentations which apparently negative the organised unity and harmony of the universe are realised to be necessary and non-contradictory phase of the development of the part-consciousness towards its establishment in infinite Selfhood. Towards this man is expected to endeavour. Modern man possesses all material com-mforts, he knows how to fly like a bird and swim like a fish; but he has yet to learn how to balance and act like a man, though in him is hidden the sense of perfection. It is in man that the effulgence of Truth begins to show its head. It is up to him to make use of it in his ascent to universality of experience, in his daily life here on earth in relation to his other brethren that inhabit this very space-time order. For this he has to know his true position as a man.
There is here in the universe a mysterious connection among things, which is more than the causal one familiar to the mechanistic philosophies. Nor does the theory of finalism solve the riddle of universal interdependence. The relation of God and man is not merely a mechanical one. Not even the attempt to explain it through resort to ultimate ends or purposes can suffice in

envisaging this trans-empirical phenomenon. The law of causation and the method of arguing in a straightlineholdgoodonlyintheworldofsensory-experience.Logicandtherulesofreason are verygood,and,perhaps,theonlyreliableaidinone'scorrectapprehensionoftheexternal world boundupinaspace-timecontinuum.Butthesemethodsareamiserablefailureintheir endeavour to fathom the nature of the tremendous relation that is between a part and the organic Wholetowhichthepartbelongs.

Any givensituationintheuniverseisamirrorinwhichtheconditionofthewholeuniverseis reflected. A part stands for the order of the Whole, which shows that in understanding and acting, man, to be really wise, should consider the entire situation of the universe, the true relation that one has with the others in the environment of the cosmos.

This factisstressedbytheBhagavadGitainitsemphasisonBuddhiYogaanditsadmonitionto fix actioninknowledge.TheknowledgeoftheOneinthemanyandthemanyintheOne,which the BhagavadGitaregardsasthehighestpeakintherangeofexperienceandwhichcanbe reached only through intuition and not through the intellect, as an all-comprehensive act of simultaneously grasping in one's consciousness the entire content of existence. It is not the mathematical way of reasoning which the intellect follows but unswerving faith in the Supreme Being thatleadstothisstateofomniscience.Whenhisknowledgesupportsouractions,we become Karma-Yogins. When our actions find themselves in this knowledge, we become Jnana-Yogins. When we are attracted to this knowledge and love it by our having an instinct towards it, we are said to be Bhakti-Yogins. The Bhagavad Gita speaks from all standpoints, for it is thearticulateexpressionoftheIntegralWhole,LordSriKrishna,whowastheessenceof wisdom, a many-sided personality of variegated activity, a great Yogi and a centre of boundless love. Hehastobetakenastheperfectpatternforalltoemulate,averitableembodimentofthe spirit oftheBhagavadGita.

The eyeofmanblindedbymaterialforcesbeholdsnotthetruthofthings.Political,economical, cultural and religious activity should be based on the supreme and irrefutable fact of the necessity for man to evolve into higher and higher forms of Self-integration until its absoluteness is reached.Withoutthisundercurrentofconsciousness,lifebecomesbarrenandisnotworthits name. If this is forgotten in life, all activity becomes meaningless and even suicide. Pain is the result of paying a deaf ear to this eternal call of Absolute Unity in the Spiritual Reality. Suffering can beavoidedonlywhenwhatonedoesisinconsonancewiththelawoftruthAbsolute.

O man!Openyoureyesandlookatyourfolly!Youhavebeensearchingforpeaceand abundance, but in the wrong way, with the consequence that you do not have them. Remember that youhavetoembraceforthis,theentiremanifestationinthegamutofyourlife,andthatyou are movingtowardsit.Whenyouknowitandaccordingtothishavingknowledge,youbecome a Yogi,andarealstudentoftheBhagavadGita.Launchyourselffromthisdayinasincere effort tofollowthetruespiritorhisuniversalgospelandpractiseitsteachingsforbringingpeace not onlytoyourselfbuttotheuniverseatlarge

1954

PURNA BRAHMA YOGA

Seekers of Truth,
May the Lord bless you all! May the auspicious Gita Jayanti Celebrations open to you a new phase of spiritual life. May these celebrations be an occasion for the rejoicing of the Inner Spirit in the remembrance of the Eternal Lord Sri Krishna. For, this is the supreme blessing which man here can hope for.
The Bhagavad Gita appeals to the entire being of man. It is the gospel of Purna-Brahma Yoga- the Yoga of the contact of the soul with the Eternal, the way of the realisation of the Highest Self which is immanent in the universe and is transcendent truth reigning supreme beyond the realm of sense and understanding. To bring about the immanence of the transcendent, to transform human activity into Yogic discipline, to make life a continuous process of contemplation on the Divine Being is the avowed ideal of the Bhagavad Gita. The basis of action in life should be the truth declared by the Lord: "There is nothing higher than I; everything is strung on Me as beads on a thread" (VII-7). Man lives, moves, and has his being in God, and to retain this consciousness during the performance of duties incumbent on him in this world is the art which the Bhagavad Gita teaches him in various ways. And this is the Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita: To have one's feet planted upon the earth and the head fixed in the heavens Sri Krishna Himself exemplifies in His life the conduct of the paragon of a Yogi. To practise the Bhagavad Gita Yoga is to emulate the life of Sri Krishna.
The unique feature of this Yoga is that it is a technique which overhauls all sides of the human personality, and the pursuit of any aspect of this Yoga, fully and correctly, means a parallel advancement along all the other aspects, also. The Lord expects every man to be able to fulfil the demands of the conditions to which the individuality of man is subject, by resort to the trans-empirical reality underlying the individuality. The Yogi par excellence is he who, ever united with the Eternal Krishna within, lives as a normal man, working in the world for the good of all, doing Lokasangraha, guiding the ignorant and the undeveloped along the path to perfection. The true Yogi is a child with a child, a youth with a youth and aged one with the aged, wise with the wise, jolly with the jolly. He pities the distressed, serves the suffering and the needy; is friendly with the fortunate and happy with the virtuous. He is not affected by the conduct of others; nor do others shrink away from him. Sri Krishna exhorts man to learn to be friendly with the universe, for it is the body of God. All the diversity should be known to be grounded in Unity, as having proceeded from Unity (XIII-30).
When this knowledge comes to man, he gets freed from the notion of the separation of the self from other forms of existence, and considers his good and others' good as one. The individual, social, national and universal good mean to such a person one and the same thing, for the truly

good cannotdifferfrompersontoperson,thoughtheremaybestagesofgoodinaccordance with the degreesoftheunfoldmentofconsciousness.
The relativeshouldconformtotheAbsolute,thoughtherelativeisotherthantheAbsoluteinthe characteristics it manifests. Man should live in obedience to the law and justice of God. This kind of livingisYoga.
Man! Do notbeledastraybythefalseideathatreligionandYogaarequeerthingsunconnected with normalhealthylifeonearth.Thismisconceptionarisesbecauseyouhavenoknowledgeof your true relationtoGodandtheuniverse.Youthinkthatyouarelikeapebbleinavastshore, different fromotherpebbles.No,youareratherapartofalivingorganismwhichexistsand works for thegoodoftheorganism,andthisorganismistheuniverse.Asacellinthehuman body cannotbehealthyunlessthebodyasawholeishealthy,soyoucannothopetoreach fulfilment andblessednessunlessyouworkforuniversalfulfilmentortheuniversalgood.Thisis the inner meaningofSriKrishna'sassertion:"CometoMealone";forSriKrishnaspeakshere as the CosmicMan.ItmeansthatmanShouldaspiretobecomeasuperman,toreachthe consummation of his being in Universal Life. Until a total sacrifice of the ego and personality at the altar oftheomnipresentKrishnaisoffered,manshallremainaman,whatheisinbodily confinement.
Yoga is thescienceofrightliving.Ithasnothingtodowithanyreligiousbelief,traditionalfaith, colour, vocationorclime.YogaisneitherEasternnorWestern;itisoftheworld,ofhumanityin general. KrishnaisnotmerelyaHinduGod;HeistherepresentativeoftheInnerRealitywhich is in all withoutdifference.TheBhagavadGitaisnotmerelyanAryanscripture,butthegospel of divine life.ItisthescriptureoftheYogi,andaYogionecanbeineverywalkoflife,atevery step and stage;forYogaadmitsofdegrees.EvenonewhoaspiresforYogaisbeyondthe ordinary rulesofhumanconductandreligiouspractices(VI-44).Tobecomewideranddeeper, more inclusiveinone'sbeingandconsciousness,istheaimofYoga;andthisisthegoalof human life.
May the GitaJayantiCelebrationsheraldinyouallthriseofaconsciousnessoftheUniversal Yoga of theBhagavadGita.MayyouallrecognisethePresenceoftheAntaryamin-Isvara,and strive to installHiminthetemplesofyourhearts.MaytheBhagavadGitafindinyouamoving commentary on it! May you all attain success in your endeavours towards God-realisation!
Om Tat Sat!

1955

INDIA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD OF TODAY

Salutations to Lord Krishna, the Eternal Light of Wisdom! arIf at any time the world needed the Message of the Bhagavad Gita, it is now. With humanity at the cross-roads and India free, independent and wise, the Gita- Drama is re-enacted on this world-stage now! India has to assume the role of Lord Krishna and enlighten mankind.

Forces of darkness -pride, selfishness, greed and lust for power, prestige and position- these assail mankind, cloud its vision, confuse its intelligence, and lead to its self-destruction. With the enormity of advance that science has achieved today, war inevitably would mean terrible destruction: destruction not only of those who cause the war and thus invite it upon themselves, but eventhosewhoarecompletelyinnocentofit.

What is the Message that Sri Krishna would give the world now? "Stand up. O, Man!" the Lord would say: "gird up your loins! Yield not to impotence. Ruthlessly slay these inner enemies of peace. Lust, anger, greed are the three sure ways to ruin. It is by renouncing them, by renouncing all desires, and by loving all beings and working for the welfare of all beings, that you can acquire Eternal Life, Perennial Peace, and Unfading Bliss."

There is no enemy outside you! Turn your gaze within.

This mysterious mind, the most potent instrument in the hands of Maya, the power that deludes all, is your worst enemy. Your battle is not with this nation or that, this community or that, this religion or that, but with this inner enemy. Get up, then, and apply yourself to the task of conquering this enemy, the mind. Once it is purified and brought under your complete control, it Will become your best friend. You will enjoy peace and you will radiate peace. The leaders of all nations should first acquire this inward peace and then alone will they be able to radiate peace, work for peace and establish peace on earth.

There is nothing like selfless service of humanity to purify the mind. Selfless service is the great talisman that will instantly drive out of the mind all negative thoughts and tendencies. If one serves humanity selflessly, without expecting to be rewarded for his service, without being attached to the service, knowing that it is the Lord that works through him and that he is only an instrument in His Hands, there is no doubt that here and now, this very instant, he will be enlightened and liberated. This is the bold declaration of the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita.

May youallpractisetheYogaoftheBhagavadGitaandroamaboutasSthithaprajnasand Jivanmuktas in this very birth, nay, this very second.

May therebepeaceonearth!

1956

THE GOSPEL OF KARMA YOGA

Seekers of Truth,
The Bhagavad Gita is the message of the Supreme Sovereign of the universe to all mankind, intended to rouse the slumbering consciousness to the magnificent heights of Divine Splendour and Glory. The trouble of man is in his erroneous notions in regard to his relations to the Supreme Principle that exists as the very vitality and life of all phenomenal beings. The Bhagavad Gita voices forth the great truth that, second to the Divine Essence, there is nothing anywhere to be found (VII. 7). If this is the truth, if the God of humanity is the God of the world, if He is immanent in all things, being at the same time transcendent, then, the substance of our existence, the material of our objects of perception, the knowledge that we have of things, should be inseparable from the Ultimate Reality. Man's selfish life, then, loses its support, and by forgetting its own inner substance, it cuts the ground from under its own feet.
No person can really afford to lead happily a completely selfish life, for this is contrary to the law of the attainment of permanent happiness. Selfishness, though it is directed to the obtaining of happiness, cannot bring happiness, for it, while seeking happiness, really turns away from the source of happiness. Human activity is a dramatic display of the struggle of the individual for the acquisition of unceasing happiness, but as this struggle, this endeavour, is shot through with belief in things that perish, faith in the reality of the independence of the human personality, and an implied neglect of the eternal Presence of the Divine in all things, it is doomed to failure. Sri Krishna exhorts Arjuna to be careful to see that action is rooled in the Yoga of the higher purified understanding, the knowledge that is not heedless towards the recognition of the supremacy of the Absolute over all doers, deeds and results of deeds. The Karma Yogi bears in mind that experiences of individuals are relative to particularities, and the ultimate worth or value of any experience can be known and realised only in the Universal Consciousness of which all are but parts. The benefits that one enjoys in life are the products of cooperative action on the part of all individuals of the universe, put together, and he who tries to appropriate things for his own individual satisfaction is a veritable thief (III. 12). Man is not estranged from his environment.
He is as much influenced by outward circumstances as he contributes to condition them in relation to himself. The individual, the family, the society, the nation and the world are all gradually and progressively arranged fields of the pervasion and activity of consciousness, where it becomes wider and wider until it grasps the whole universe within its comprehension and gets absorbed in the reality of its own Higher Self. Everyone of these stages should become a field for the dynamic practice of Yoga, in different degrees, and every act should become a contemplation of the Divine Being.

The BhagavadGitaasagospelofKarmaYogapointsouttomantherightattitudethathe should develop towards actions and things. Anasakti, non-attachment, is the watchword of the Divine Teacher. Vairagya and Abhyasa-not to be attached to the things of the world, and to be ever in a state of contemplation of the Eternal in and through life- is the ideal of Karma Yoga. Act one must; there is no escaping from action. For the very law of empirical life is action. But the dexterity, the Kausalam, of the Yogi lies in his being able to convert action into Yoga. The great skill in action which Sri Krishna speaks of has its foundations in Samatva or equanimity which is identified with Yoga itself. The individual agent, in this Yoga, regards himself as an instrument in the Infinite Hands of the Supreme Lord and works in this world as a pointer on the dial ofawatchmovesbeingworkedfromwithinbythecontrollingmechanism,theonlyspecial feature in the case of the Karma Yogi being the maintenance, on his part, of the consciousness of non-attachmentandoftheall-pervasivenessoftheDivinewhiletheindicatorofawatchhas no consciousnessofthemechanismbehindit.Efforthastobetransformedintoaspontaneous movement of the Universal Consciousness. Then all activity becomes Yoga: even bodily functions, natural actions and vital processes become parts of the universal evolution. The incubus of pain lands itself on the head of the ordinary man of action, because he acts with the false idea that he is sharply cut off from his environment, that he is an isolated individual content of a vast universe which lies outside of him. God, to the common mind, is an ideal possibility, a destination to be reached in the future. But to the enlightened aspirant after perfection, God is an actuality, the sum and substance of all life and meaning, the reality that sustains the very breath of the universe. Here lies the difficulty in practising Karma Yoga, that it demands of the Yogi an inner attitude of detachment from dualistic appearances, and a persistent attempt to visualise the One in the many in everyday life. It is not I that do, but it is the One that does.It is not 'I' that exist, but it is the One that is. The sense of the 'I' vanishes in the practice of the technique of Karma Yoga. It is a calm, subdued, well thought-out intelligent, adjustment of oneself to the general situation of the universe as a whole, without yielding to the tyranny of the senses and the ego, freeing oneself from the tangle of likes and dislikes, greed and anger, that constitutes the pith of the Karma Yoga that is taught in the Bhagavad Gita.

This Yoga is the great need of the hour. There is no forced retirement from action, but there is only a discovery of the truth of action, the deeper significance of human life, a rank neglect of which has resulted in the maladies that are surrounding man from all sides today. Equanimity even in the midst of disturbing activity, Yoga in daily life, is possible when man recognises that the universe is a living organism, every element of which perforce tends to and does fulfil the unitary law of the organism. The duty of everyone, then, is not to forget this fact of one's being an integral part of this great Organism, which is but the outward manifestation of God Himself, and to work in loyalty to it, to the best of one's knowledge and ability. The prosperity of the world is thus ensured by the Bhagavad Gita way of life. Man!

Open your eyes. Act with this knowledge, and with this obedience. You are saved.

Bhagavad Gita

For

Busy People

FOREWORD

Life is very complex in thesedays. The struggle for existence is very keen. Man finds no time to study big philosophical andreligious books, or the whole of the Gita. Here is an abridged edition of the Gita which containsitsquintessence for the use of students, doctors, advocates and busy people. That man who merely studiesdaily even a few Slokas is not stained by Karma. He obtains perfect wisdom, SupremePeace and eternal Bliss and Immortality. Then what to speak of him who lives and acts accordingto the spirit of the teachings of the Gita? He who reads even a quarterof a Sloka is freed from great sins and fear of death. The Gita is your benefactorand constant companion. The Gita is your Teacher and Guru. The Gita is your real Father andMother. The Gita is your solace, support and prop. The Gita is an embodiment of nectar. Drinkthis nectar daily and attain Immortality. May the Gita guide you!

CHAPTER I

The Despondency of Arjuna

(Arjuna Vishada Yoga)

This is the Yoga of the despondency of Arjuna. Arjuna saw all his kinsmen, sons, brothers-in-law, cousins, teachers (Bhishma, Drona and others) standing arrayed in battle and said to Lord Krishna (26): "My limbs fail and my mouth is parched, my body quivers and my hairs stand on end; Gandiva slips from my hand (29). I do not wish to kill them even for the sake of the Kingship of the three worlds (35). It is a great sin to kill my teachers and relatives. If I kill them, family traditions will perish. There will be lawlessness (40). Women will become Corrupt. There will be caste-confusion. The slayer of the families will go to hell for, their ancestors will fall, deprived of rice-balls and oblations (42). Caste-customs and family-customs will vanish* (43). Arjuna was overwhelmed with grief. He threw away his bow and arrows and sank down on the seat of the chariot (47).

CHAPTER II

Sankhya Yoga

This is Jana Yoga or Vedanta which bespeaks of the Immortality of the Soul. Lord Krishna said to Arjuna: "Wake up from the slumber of ignorance. This body and the world are indwelt by the Imperishable Atman, Brahman or the Soul. None can cause the destruction of That--the Imperishable. This Atman is not born nor does It ever die. It is unborn, eternal, changeless, ancient and inexhaustible. It is not killed when the body is killed (20). It slays not, nor is It slain. Just as a man casts off worn out clothes and puts on new ones, so also the embodied Self casts off worn out bodies and enters others which are new (22). Weapons cut It not, fire burns It not,

water wets It not, wind dries It not (23). This Self is unmanifested, unthinkable and unchangeable (24).
"O Arjuna! do your duty. It is the duty of a Kshatriya to fight. There is nothing higher for a Kshatriya than a righteous war (31). Develop a balanced mind. Having made pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat the same, engage thou in battle, thus thou shalt not incur sin; thou shalt cast off the bonds of action (38).
"Thy right is to work only but never with its fruits. Let not the fruit of action be thy motive, nor let thy attachment be for inaction (47). Perform action, being steadfast in Yoga abandoning attachment and balanced in success and failure. Evenness of mind is Yoga" (48). Arjuna says, "O Lord Krishna! What is the state of a Sthithapraina? How does he speak? How does he sit, how does he walk?" (54). Lord Krishna replies, "A Jivanmukia is free from desires, longings, mine-ness, I-ness, attachment and fear. He is satisfied in his own Self. He is indifferent amidst sensual pleasures. He is not elated by getting desirable objects. He has a poised mind at all times and under all conditions. He has perfect control over his mind and senses. He lives in Brahman. He is centred in his own Self. He is dead to the sensual world" (55 to 57).

CHAPTER III

The Yoga of Action

(KarmaYoga)

Arjuna said, "If it be thought by Thee that knowledge is superior to action, why then O Krishna, does Thou engagest me in this terrible action (1)? Thou confusest my understanding. Tell me that one way for certain by which I may attain eternal bliss" (2). Lord Krishna replies, "In this world there is a twofold path, the path of knowledge of the Sankhyas and the path of action of the Yogins (3). Man cannot remain even for a moment without performing some kind of action. Everyone is helplessly driven to action by the qualities born of nature (5). That fool, who merely controls the organs of action but continually thinks of the objects of senses is called a Mithyachara or hypocrite (6).
"Do sacrifice to the Devatas. They will in turn give you plenty of food and cattle (11). Constantly perform your duty without attachment. You will attain the Supreme (19). Janaka attained perfection by action (20). The great man should set an example to the world (21). I perform action though there is nothing in the three worlds that should be done by Me (22).
"The egoistic man thinks 'I am the doer'. In reality Prakriti does everything (27). A Jnani who remains as a silent witness and who knows the essence of the division of the quality and functions is not bound (28).

"Control Raga-dvesha, obstructors of the spiritual path.
Do your own duty well. Control desire and anger- the enemies of wisdom. Master first the senses. Kill this enemy-desire by restraining the self by the Self and by knowing Him who is superior to intellect" (37-43).

CHAPTER IV

The Yoga of Wisdom

(Jnana-Vibhaga Yoga)

Lord Krishna said, "O Bharata! Whenever righteousness declines and unrighteousness becomes powerful, then I Myself come to birth (7). For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteous. ness I am born from age to age (8). In whatever way men approach Me, so do I reward them: men follow in every way My path, O son of Pritha (11). He who sees inaction in action and action in inaction, he is wise among men, he is a Yogi, even while performing all actions (18). Whose undertakings are all destitute of desires and purposes and whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge him the wise have called a Sage (19). "Without hope, with the mind self-controlled, having abandoned attachment to the fruit of actions, all greed and envy, always content with whatsoever he obtains without effort, free from the pairs of opposites, balanced in success and failure, with his thoughts established in Brahman, he is not doing anything, although doing actions; he is not bound, though acting (20- 23). "Brahman is the oblation; Brahman is the clarified butter; by Brahman is the oblation poured into the fire of Brahman; Brahman verily shall be reached by him who always sees Brahman in action (24). "Some Yogins perform sacrifice to Devas; while the Jivanmuktas offer the Self in the fire Brahman. Some again offer hearing and other senses in the fire of restraint. Others again sacrifice all the functions of the senses and the breath in the fire of Yoga of self-restraint kindled by knowledge. Others again offer wealth, austerity, study of scriptures and knowledge as sacrifice. Others offer as sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming and the incoming in the outgoing (25-29). "Superior is knowledge-sacrifice to the sacrifice of objects. All actions in their entirety, O Partha, culminate in knowledge (33). "Know that by long prostration, by question and service: the wise who have realised the Truth will instruct thee in that knowledge (34). Even if thou art the most sinful of all sinners. yet thou

shalt verily cross all sins by the raft of knowledge (39). Just as the blazing fire reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes (37).
"The man who is full of faith, who is devoted to it, and who has subdued the senses and obtains this knowledge and having obtained knowledge he goes at once to the Supreme Peace (39).
The ignorant, the faithless, the doubting self goes to destruction; there is neither this world, nor the other, nor happiness for the doubting (40).
"Therefore, with the sword of knowledge cut asunder the doubt of the Self born of ignorance, residing in the heart and take refuge in Yoga. Arise, O Bharata" (42).

CHAPTER V

The Yoga of Renunciation of Action

(Karma-Sannyasa Yoga)

Arjuna said, "Renunciation of actions, O Krishna, Thou praisest, and then also Yoga. Tell me conclusively that which is the better of the two" (1).
The Blessed Lord said, "Renunciation and Yoga of action both lead to the highest bliss; but out of the two, Yoga of action is superior to the renunciation of action (2). Children, not the wise, speak of Sankhya (knowledge) and Yoga (Yoga of action) as distinct; he who is truly established in one obtains the fruits of both (4). That place which is reached by the Sankhyas (Janis) is reached by the Yogis (Karma Yogis). He sees, who sees Sankhya and Yoga are one (5).
"'I do nothing at all', thus would the knower of Truth think-seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, going, sleeping, breathing, speaking, letting go, seizing, opening and closing the eyes-convinced that the senses move among the sense-objects (8-9). Neither agency nor action does the Lord create for the world, nor union with the fruits of actions. But it is Nature that acts (14).
"Thinking of That, merged in That, established in That, solely devoted to That, they go whence there is no return, their Sins dispelled by knowledge (17).
"Sages look with an equal eye in a branmin endowed with learning and humility, in a cow, in an elephant, and even in a dog and in an outcaste (13). With the self unattached to external contacts he finds bliss in the Self: with the self engaged in the meditation of Brahman he attains endless bliss (21). The enjoyments that are born of contacts are only generators of pain, for they have a beginning and an end, O son of Kunti (O Kaunteya); the wise do not rejoice in them (22).
"Hewho is able, while still in the world, to withstand before the liberation from the body the impulse born out of desire and anger, he is a Yogi, he is a happy man (23).

"Eternal peace lies near to those controlled ascetics who are free from desire and anger, who have controlled their thoughts and who have realised the Self (26).
"Shutting out all external contacts and fixing the gaze between the eyebrows, equalising the outgoing and incoming breaths moving within the nostrils, with senses, mind and intellect ever controlled, having liberation as his supreme goal, free from desire, fear and anger the sage is verily liberated for ever" (27-28).

CHAPTER VI

The Yoga of Meditation

(Adhyatma Yoga)

Lord Krishna said, "He who performs his bounden duty without depending on the fruits of action-he is a Sannyasin and a Yogi; not he who is without fire and without action (1). For a Muni or a sage who wishes to attain to Yoga, action is said to be the means; for the same sage who has attained to Yoga, inaction or quiescence is said to be the means (3).
"Let a man lift himself by his own Self alone, let him not lower himself; for the Self alone is the friend of oneself and this Self alone is the enemy of oneself (5). The Self is the friend of the self for him who has conquered himself by the Self, but to the unconquered self, this self stands in the position of an enemy like the external foe (6).
"Having in a clear spot established a firm seat of his own, neither too high nor too low, made of a cloth, a skin and Kusa grass one over the other, let him firmly hold his body, head and neck erect and still, gazing at the tip of his nose, without looking around, serene-minded fearless, firm in the vow of a Brahmachari, having controlled the mind, thinking on Me, and balanced, let him sit, having Me as the Supreme Goal (11-14).
"Verily Yoga is not possible for him who eats too much, nor for him who does not eat at all, nor for him who sleeps too much nor for him who is always wakeful, O Arjuna (16).
"Yoga becomes the destroyer of pain for him who is moderate in eating and recreation, who is moderate in exertion in actions, who is moderate in sleep and wakefulness (17). Little by little let him attain quietude by intellect held in firmness; having made the mind established in the Self, let him not think of anything (25). From whatever cause the restless and unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it under the control of the self alone (26).
"With the mind harmonised by Yoga he sees the Self, abiding in all beings, and all beings in the Self, he sees the same everywhere (29). He who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, he never becomes separated from Me, nor do I become separated from him" (30).

Arjuna said, "The mind verily, O Krishna, restless, turbulent, strong and unyielding, I deem it quite as difficult to control it as the wind" (34).
Lord Krishna said, "Undoubtedly, O mighty-armed, the mind is difficult to control and restless, but by practice, O Kaunteya and by dispassion, it can be restrained" (35).
Arjuna said, "He who is unable to control himself though he is possessed of faith, whose mind wanders away from Yoga, what end does he, having failed to attain perfection in Yoga meet, O Krishna?" (37).
The blessed Lord said, "Having attained to the worlds of the righteous and having dwelt there for everlasting years, he Who fell from Yoga is reborn in a house of the pure and wealthy (41). Or he is born in a family of wise Yogins only; verily a birth like this is very difficult to obtain in this world (42). Then he comes in touch with the knowledge acquired in his former body and strives more than before for perfection, O son of the Kurus (43). By that very former practice he is born on in spite of himself. Even he who merely wishes to know Yoga goes beyond the Brahmic world (44).
"The Yogi is thought to be superior to the ascetics and even superior to men of knowledge (obtained through study of Sastras); he is also superior to men of action; therefore, be thou a Yogi, O Arjuna! (46). And among all Yogins, he who, full of faith with his inner self merged in Me, worships Me, he is deemed by Me to be the most devout (47).

CHAPTER VII

The Yoga of Wisdom

(JnanaYoga)

The Blessed Lord said, "I shall declare to thee in full this knowledge combined with realisation, which being known, nothing here remains to be known (2). Among thousands of men, one perchance strives for perfection; even among those successful strivers, only one perchance knows Me in essence (3).
"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intellect, egoism-thus is My Prakriti divided eightfold (4). This is the inferior Prakrit, but different from it, know thou, O mighty-armed, My higher Prakriti, the very life-element, by which this world is upheld (5).
*I am the sapidity in waters, O son of Kunti. I am the light in the moon, and the sun; I am the syllable OM in all the Vedas, sound in ether and virility in men (8).
*Verily, this divine illusion of Mine, caused by the qualties is difficult to cross over; those who take refuge in Me alone cross over this illusion (14).

Four kinds of vituous men worshis Me O Arjuna, and they are the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the wise, O lord of Bharatas (16). Of these, the Wise, ever steadfast and devoted to the One excels; for I am exceedingly dear to the wise, and he is dear to Me (17). Noble indeed are all these; but the wise man, I deem as My very Self; for, steadfast in mind he is established in Me alone, as the Supreme Goal (18). At the end of many births the wise man comes to Me, realising that all this is Vasudeva, the innermost Self, such a great soul is very hard to find (19).
"By the delusion of the pairs of opposites, arising from desire and aversion (likes and dislikes) O Bharata, all beings are subject to illusion, O Parantapa (scorcher of foes) (27). But those men of pure deeds, whose sin has come to an end, who are freed from the delusion of the pairs of opposites, worship Me, steadfast in vows (23).
"Those who know Me in the Adhibhuta (pertaining to the elements) in the Adhidaiva (pertaining to the gods) and in the Adhiyajna (pertaining to the sacrifice), know Me even at the time of death, steadfast in mind" (30).

CHAPTER VIII

The Yoga of Imperishable Brahman

(Akshara Brahma Yoga)

Arjuna asked: "What is that Brahman? What is Self-knowledge? What is action, O Purushottama? What is declared to be the knowledge of the elements? And, what is Adhidaiva? (1). Who and how is Adhiyajna here in this body, O Madhusudana (destroyer of Madhu)? And how at the time of death, art Thou to be known by the self-controlled?" (2).
The Blessed Lord said: "Brahman is the Imperishable, the Supreme; His essential nature is called self-knowledge; the offering to gods which causes the origin, existence and manifestation of beings and also sustains them is called action (3). Adhibhuta or knowledge of the elements pertains to My perishable nature and the Purusha or the Soul is Adhidaivata; | alone am the Adhiyajna here in this body, O best of the embodied (4).
"Whosoever, leaving the body, goes forth remembering
Me alone at the time of death, he attains My Being; there is no doubt about this (5). Whosoever at the end leaves the body, thinking upon any being, to that being alone he goes, O Kaunteya (O son of Kunti), because of his constant thought of that being (6).
"Having closed all the gates, having confined mind in the heart, having fixed the life-breath in the head, engaged in the practice of concentration, uttering the one-syllabled Om, the Brahman, and remembering Me, he who departs, leaving the body, attains the Supreme Soul (12-13).

*I am easily attainable by that ever-steadfast Yogi who constantly remembers Me, daily, not thinking of another (with a single mind) O Partha! (14). What is called the unmanifested and Imperishable, That, they say is the highest goal (path). They who reach It return not. That is My highest abode (place or state) (20).
"That Highest Purusha, O Partha, is attainable by unswerving devotion to Him alone, within Whom all beings dwell, by Whom all this is pervaded (22).
"Fire, light, daytime, the bright fortnight, the six months of the northern path of the sun (the northern solstice) - then departing men who know Brahman go to Brahman (24). This is the path of Devayana or the path of light.
"Smoke, night time, the dark fortnight also, the six months of the southern path of the sun (the southern solstice)-attaining by these to the lunar light, the Yogi returns (25). This is the path of Pitriyana or the path of darkness.
"Whatever fruit of merit is declared in the scriptures to accrue from the study of the Vedas, the performance of sacrifices, practice of austerities and gift beyond all this goes the Yogi, having known this, and attains to the Supreme Primeval or first Abode" (28).

CHAPTER IX

The Yoga of Kingly Science and Kingly Secret

(Raja Vidya RajaGuhya Yoga)

Lord Krishna said, "Kingly Science, Kingly Secret, the Supreme Purifier is this realisable by direct intuitional knowledge, according to rignteoushess, very easy to perform, imperishable (2).
"All this world is pervaded by Me in My unmanifested form (aspect); all beings exist in Me, but I do not dwell in them (4). I am the father of this world, the mother, the dispenser of fruits of action, and grandfather; the one thing to be known, the Purifier, the syllable Om, and also the Rik, the Sama and the Yajus also (17). I am the goal, the supporter, the Lord, the witness, the Abode, the shelter, the friend, the origin, dissolution, the foundation, the treasure-house and the seed imperishable (18).
"To those men who worship Me alone, thinking of no other, to those ever united, I secure what is not already possessed (Yoga) and preserve what they already possess (Kshema) (22).
Whoever offers Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, that I accept, offered with devotion by the pure-minded (26). Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest in sacrifice, whatsoever givest, whatsoever practiseth as austerity, O Kaunteya, do it as an offering unto Me (27).

"Even if the most sinful worship Me, with devotion to none else, he too should indeed be regarded as righteous, for he has rightly resolved (30). Soon he becomes righteous and attains eternal peace, O Kaunteya; know thou for certain that My devotee is never destroyed" (31).

CHAPTER X

The Yoga of Divine Glories

(VibhutiYoga)

The Blessed Lord said, "With their minds wholly in Me, with their life absorbed in Me, enlightening each other and ever speaking of Me, the wise are satisfied and delighted (9). To them ever steadfast, worshipping Me with love, I give the Yoga Of discrimination by which they come to Me (10). Out of mere compassion for them, I, dwelling within their self, destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the luminous lamp of knowledge" (11).

Arjuna said, "O Lord! Thou shouldst indeed tell, without reserve of Thy divine glories by which Thou existeth pervading all these worlds" (16). The Blessed Lord said, "I am the Self, O Gudakesa, seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and also the end of all beings (20). Among the twelve Adityas, I am Vishnu; among luminous objects, the radiant Sun; I am Marichi among the forty-nine Marts; among the stars the Moon am I (21). Among the Vedas I am the Sama Veda; I am Vasava (Indra) among the gods; among the senses I am the mind; and I am the intelligence among living beings (22). And among the Rudras, I am Sankara; among the Yakshas and Rakshasas, the Lord of wealth (Kubera); among the Vasus I am Pavaka (Agni); and among the (seven) mountains I am the Meru (23). Among the household priests (of kings) O Partha, know Me to be the chief, Brihaspati; among generals I am Skanda; among lakes, I am the ocean (24). Among the great Rishis I am Bhrigu; among words I am the one syllable OM; among sacrifices I am the sacrifice of silent repetition (Japa Yajna); among immovable things, the Himalayas (25). Among the trees I am the Asvattha; among divine Rishis Narada; among Gandharvas Chitraratha; among the perfected ones the Muni Kapila (26). "Of purifiers I am the wind; Rama of warriors am I; among fishes I am the shark; among streams I am the Ganga (31). Among letters the letter 'A' I am; and the dual among all compounds; I am, verily the inexhaustible or everlasting Time; I am the dispenser of fruits of actions having faces in all directions (33). I am the gambling of cheat; I am the splendour of the splendid; I am victory, I am determination of those who are determined, I am the goodness of the good (36).

There is no end Of My Divine Glories, O Parantapa; but this is a brief statement of My divine attributes" (40).

CHAPTER XI

The Yoga of the Vision of the Cosmic Form

(Visva Rupa Darsana Yoga)

Arjuna said, "Now O Supreme Lord, as Thou hast thus described Thyself in that way O Purushottama (Purusha Supreme), I wish to see actually Thy divine form" (3).
The Blessed Lord said, "Behold O Partha forms of Me by hundreds and thousands of different sorts, divine, of various colours and shapes (5). Behold the Adityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Asvins and also the forty-nine Maruts: behold many wonders never seen before, O Bharata (6). Now behold O Gudakesa in this My body the whole universe centred in one-including the moving and the unmoving -and whatever else thou desirest to see (7). But thou art not able to behold Me with these thine eyes alone; I give thee divine eye; behold My lordly Yoga" (8).
Lord Krishna showed to Partha His Supreme Form with numerous mouths and eyes with numerous wonderful sights, with numerous divine ornaments, with numerous divine weapons uplifted (10).
Arjuna said, "I see all the gods, O God, in Thy body and also hosts of various classes of beings, Brahma the Lord seated on the lotus, all the Rishis and celestial serpents (15). I see Thee without beginning, middle or end, infinite in power of endless arms, the sun and the moon being Thy eyes, the burning fire Thy mouth heating the whole universe with the radiance (19). Into Thy mouths terrible with teeth and fearful to behold all the sons of Dhritarashtra, Bhishma, Drona, Karna, etc, hurriedly enter; some are found sticking in the gaps between the teeth with their heads crushed to powder" (26-27).
The Blessed Lord said, "Therefore, stand up and obtain fame. Conquer the enemies and enjoy the unrivalled kingdom. Verily by Myself they have been already slain; be thou a mere instrument, O Savyasachi (Arjuna)" (33). Arjuna said, "Thou art the Primeval God, the Ancient Purusha; Thou art the supreme refuge of this universe. Thou art the knower, the knowable and the supreme abode. By Thee is this universe pervaded, O Being of infinite form (38). I am delighted, having seen what was never seen before and yet my mind is distressed with fear. Show me that form only with four hands, O God; have mercy, O God of gods, O Abode of the Universe" (45-46).
The Blessed Lord assumed His gentle form with four hands and showed this form to Arjuna and consoled him who was terrified (50).

The Blessed Lord said, "Neither by the Vedas nor by austerity, nor by gifts, nor by sacrifice can I be seen in this form, as thou hast seen Me so easily. But by the single-minded devotion, can I of this form be known and seen in reality and also entered into, O Parantapa. He who does actions for Me, who looks on Me as, the Supreme, who is devoted to Me, who is free from attachment, who bears enmity towards no creature, he comes to Me, Pandava" (53-55).

CHAPTER XII

The Yoga of Devotion

(BhaktiYoga)

• Arjuna said, "Those devotees, who ever steadfast, thus worship Thee, and those also who worship the Imperishable, the Unmanifested- which of these are better-versed in Yoga?" (1)
The Blessed Lord said, "Those who, fixing their mind on Me, worship Me, ever-steadfast and endowed with supreme faith, in My opinion are the best in Yoga (2). Greater is their trouble whose minds are set on the unmanifested; for the goal, the unmanifested, is very hard for the embodied to reach (5).
Fix thy mind on Me only, place Thy intellect in Me; then thou shalt no doubt live in Me alone hereafter (8). If thou art not able to fix thy mind steadily on Me, then by Yoga of constant practice (Abhyasa Yoga) do thou seek to reach Me, O Dhananjaya (9). If thou art unable to practise even this Abhyasa Yoga, be thou intent on doing actions for My sake; even by doing actions for My sake, thou shalt attain perfection (10). If thou art unable to do even this then taking refuge in union with Me, renounce the fruits of all actions, with the self controlled (11).
Better indeed is knowledge than practice; than knowledge meditation is better; than meditation renunciation of the fruits of actions; peace immediately follows renunciation (12).
"He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving; ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with mind and intellect dedicated to Me, he, My devotee, is dear to Me (13-14). He who is free from envy, fear and anxiety, who is free from wants, pure, expert, unconcerned, untroubled, who has renounced all undertakings or commencements, who neither rejoices nor hates, neither grieves nor desires, who has renounced good and evil, who is full of devotion, he is dear to Me (16-17).
"He who is the same to a foe and friend, and also in honour and dishonour, who is the same in cold and heat, and in pleasure and pain, who is free from attachment, who is balanced in censure and praise, pain and pleasure, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, steady-minded, full of devotion-that man is dear to Me (18-19).

"They verily, who follow this Immortal Dharma (law or doctrine) as described above endowed with faith, regarding Me as their supreme goal, devotees, they are exceedingly dear to Me" (20).

CHAPTER XIII

The Yoga of Distinction Between the Field and Knower of the Field

(Kshetra-Kshetrajna-Vibhaga Yoga)

Arjuna said: "Prakriti (matter) and Purusha (spirit), also the field (Kshetra) and the knower of the field (Kshetrajna), knowledge and which ought to be known--these I desire to learn, O Kesava." The Blessed Lord said: "This body, O son of Kunti, is called the field (Kshetra), he who knows it (body) is called (Kshetrajna) (the knower of the field) by the sages (1). Do thou also know Me as the knower of the field in all fields, O Arjuna. Knowledge of both the field and the knower of the field is considered by Me to be the knowledge (2). "The great elements, egoism, intellect, and also the unmanifested (Mula-Prakriti or Avyaktam), the ten senses and the one (mind) and the five objects of the senses, desire, hatred, pleasure and pain, the aggregate, intelligence, courage- -the Kshetra has been thus described briefly with its modifications (5-6). "Humility, unpretentiousness, non-injury, forbearance, uprightness, service of the teacher, purity, steadfastness, self-control; indifference to the objects of the senses and also absence of egoism; perception of evil in birth, death, old age, in sickness and pain; non-attachment, non- identification of self with son, wife, home and the like and constant balance of mind in the occurrence of the desirable and the undesirable, unswerving devotion to Me by Yoga, without other object, resort to solitary places, distaste for the society of men, constant application to spiritual knowledge of Truth--this is declared to be knowledge, and what is opposed to it is ignorance (7-11). "With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere He exists in the world, enveloping all (13). Without and within all beings, the immovable and also the moveable; because of His subtlety incomprehensible; and near and far away is That (15). That the Light of all lights, is said to be beyond darkness, knowledge, the knowable, the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all (17). "He sees, who sees, that all actions are performed by Prakriti alone and that the Self is actionless (30). They who by the eye of wisdom perceive the difference between Kshetra (the

field) and the Kshetrajna (the knower of the field) and the liberation of beings from Matter (Prakriti)-they go to the Supreme" (34).

CHAPTER XIV

The Yoga of the Division of the Three Gunas

(Guna-Traya-Vibhaga-Yoga)

The lessed Lord said: "Sattva, Rajas and Tamas (purity. passion and inertia) these Gunas, O mighty-armed, born of Prakriti, bind fast in the body the indestructible embodied one (5). Of these Sattva (purity) which from its stainlessness is luminous and healthy, binds by attachment to happiness and by attachment to knowledge, O sinless one! (6). Know thou Rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of thirst for life and objects and attachment, it binds fast, O son of Kunti, the embodied one by attachment to action (7). But know thou Tamas (inertia) born of ignorance is the deluder of all embodied beings; it binds fast, O Bharata, by heedlessness, indolence and sloth (8).

"Now Sattva (purity) prevails, having overpowered Rajas and Tamas, O Bharata; now Rajas, having overpowered Sattva and Tamas; now Tamas, having overpowered Sattva and Rajas (10).

"When the wisdom-light shines at every gate (sense) in this body, then it should be known that Sattva is increasing (11). Greed, activity, the undertaking of actions, restlessness, desire- these are born of increase of Rajas, O best of the Bharatas (12). Darkness, inertness, heedlessness, and also delusion -these are born of the increase of Tamas, O descendant of the Kuru (13).

"If the embodied one dies when Sattva is predominant, then he goes to the spotless worlds of the Highest (14). If he dies when Rajas is predominant, he is born among those attached to action; if he dies when Tamas is predominant he is born in the wombs of the senseless (15). The fruit of good action, they say, is Sattvic and pure; verily the fruit of Rajas is pain and the fruit of Tamas is ignorance (16). Those who are seated in Sattva rise upwards; the Rajasic remain in the middle; and the Tamasic who follow in the course of the lowest Guna, go downwards (18). When the seer beholds not an agent other than the Gunas and knows that which is higher than the Gunas, he attains to My being (19). The embodied one, having crossed beyond these three Gunas out of which the body is evolved is freed from birth, death, old age and pain and attains the immortal" (20).

Arjuna said: "What are the marks of him who has crossed over the three qualities, O Lord? What is his conduct and how does he pass beyond the three Gunas?" (21)

The Blessed Lord said: "He, O Pandava, who hates not radiance nor activity, nor even delusion when present, nor longs for them when absent (22), he who, seated as a neutral, is not moved by Gunas; who knowing that the Gunas act, is firm and moves not (23). He to whom pain and pleasure are alike, who dwells in the Self, to whom a lump of earth, stone and gold are alike, to whom the dear and the undear are alike, who is firm, to whom censure and praise are same; the same in honour and disgrace, the same to friend and foe, abandoning all undertakings--he is said to have crossed over the qualities" (24-25).

CHAPTER XV

The Yoga of Supreme Purusha

(Purushottama Yoga)

The Blessed Lord said: "With roots above, branches below, the Asvattha is said to be indestructible; its leaves are the hymns; he who knows this knows the Vedas (1). Below and above spread its branches, nourished by the Gunas; sense-objects are its buds, and its roots grow downwards in the world of men ending in action (2). Its form is not perceived here, neither its end nor its origin nor its existence; having cut asunder this firm-rooted Asvattha with the strong axe of non-attachment, that goal should be sought for, going whither none returns again. I seek refuge in that Primeval Purusha whence streamed forth the ancient energy (3-4).
Free from pride and delusion, with the evil of attachment conquered, constantly abiding in the Self, their desires having completely turned away, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure and pain, the undeluded reach that goal Eternal (5).
"There the sun does not shine, nor the moon, nor fire; having gone thither they return not, that is My Supreme Abode (6). An eternal portion of My own self having become a living soul in the world of life, draws to itself the five senses with mind for the sixth abiding in Prakriti (7). Abiding in the body of living beings as the fire Vaisvanara, united with Prana and Apana, I digest the four kinds of food (14).
am seated in the hearts of all; from Me are memory, knowledge and their absence; I am verily that which has to be known by all the Vedas; I indeed am the author of the Vedanta and the knower of the Vedas am I (15).
"There are two Purushas in the world- the perishable and the Imperishable; all beings are perishable and the Kutastha (immutable, unchanging) is called the Imperishable (16). But there is another, the supreme Purusha, called the Highest Self, the indestructible Lord, who pervading all, sustains the three worlds (17). As I transcend the perishable and am even higher than the

Imperishable, I am known in the world and in the Veda as 'Purushottama' (the Highest Purusha) (18). "He who, undeluded thus knows Me, the Highest Purusha, he knowing all worships Me with his whole being O Bharata, this most profound teaching has been taught by Me, O sinless one. On knowing thus one becomes illumined, O Bharata and all his duties are accomplished" (19-20).

CHAPTER XVI

The Yoga of Division Between the Divine and the Demoniacal

(Daivasura-Sampad-Vibhaga Yoga)

The Blessed Lord said: "Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in the Yoga of wisdom, alms-giving, control of the senses (self-restraint), sacrifice, study of one's own scriptures, austerity, straightforwardness, non-injury, absence of anger, renunciation, peacefulness, absence of crookedness, compassion to living beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, absence of fickleness, vigour, forgiveness, fortitude, purity, absence of hatred, absence of pride- these belong to one who is born with the divine properties, O Bharata (1-3).
"Hypocrisy, arrogance, self-conceit, anger, harshness and ignorance, belong to one who is born, O Partha, with demoniacal properties (4).
"The divine properties are deemed to make for liberation, the demoniacal for bondage. Grieve not, thou art born with divine properties, O Pandava (5).
"Demoniacal men know not what to do and what to refrain from; neither purity nor good conduct, nor truth is found in them (7). They say, 'The universe is without truth, without a moral basis, without a God, brought about by mutual union, brought about by lust and nothing else' (8). Filled with insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride and arrogance, holding evil ideas through delusion, they work with impure resolves (10). Bound by a hundred ties of hope, given over to lust and anger, they strive to secure by unlawful means hoards of wealth for sensual enjoyments (12). 'This today has been gained by me, this desire I shall obtain; this wealth is mine already, and also this shall be mine in future' (13). 'I have slain this enemy, and others also I shall slay. I am lord, I enjoy, I am perfect, powerful and happy' (14). 'I am rich, well-born, who else is equal to me? I will sacrifice. I will give charity. I will rejoice' (15). These malicious and cruel-doers, worst of men in the world, I hurl them for ever into the wombs of demons only (19).

"Triple is the gate of this hell, destructive of the Self, lust, anger and greed; therefore, these three one should abandon (21). A man who is released from these three gates to darkness, O son of Kunti, does good to the self and thus reaches the Supreme Goal (22).
"He who setting aside the ordinances of the scriptures, acts under the impulse of desire, attains not to perfection, nor happiness, nor the Supreme Goal (23). Therefore, let the scriptures be thy authority in deciding as what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Having known what is said in the ordinances of the scriptures, thou shouldst work in this world" (24).

CHAPTER XVII

The Yoga of the Threefold Faith

(Sraddha-Traya-Vibhaga Yoga)

Arjuna said: "Those who setting aside the ordinances of the scriptures, perform sacrifice with faith- what faith is theirs? is it Sattva or Rajas or Tamas (Is it purity or passion or darkness)?" (1).
The Blessed Lord said: "Threefold is the faith of the embodied, which is inherent in their nature Sattvic (pure), Rajasic (passionate) and Tamasic (darkness). Do thou hear of these (2). The faith of each is in accordance with his nature, O Bharata. The man consists of his faith, as a man's faith is, so is he (3).
"Those men who perform terrible austerities not enjoined by the scriptures, given to hypocrisy and egoism, impelled by the force of their desires and passions, torture, senseless as they are, the aggregated elements forming the body, and Me also, who dwells in the body within, know thou these to be of demoniac resolves (5-6).
"The foods which increase vitality, energy, strength, health, joy and cheerfulness, which are savoury, oleaginous, substantial and agreeable, are dear to the Sattvic (8). The foods that are bitter, sour, saline, excessively hot, pungent, dry and burning, and which cause pain, grief and diseases, are dear to the Rajasic (9). That which is stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten, refused and impure, is dear to the Tamasic (10).
"The sacrifice that is offered by men without desire for fruit as enjoined by ordinance, with a fixed resolve in the mind that they should do the sacrifice as duty, is pure (11). That which is offered with a view to obtain fruit and for ostentation, O best of the Bharatas, know it to be a Rajasic Yajna (12). The sacrifice performed contrary to the ordinances in which no food is distributed, which is destitute of Mantras, gifts and faith, is said to be Tamasic (13).
Worship of the gods, the twice-born, the Gurus and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, continence and non-injury are called the austerity of the body (14). Speech which causes no

annoyance and is true, as also pleasant and beneficial and also study of the scriptures, are called the austerity of the speech (15). Serenity of the mind, equanimity, silence, self-control, purity of nature this is called the mental austerity (16).
"This threefold austerity, practised by steadfast men with the utmost faith, without desire for fruit is said to be Sattvic (pure) (17). That austerity which is practised with the object of gaining good reception, honour and worship and with ostentation is here (in this world) said to be Rajasic, unstable and transitory (18). That austerity which is practised out of a foolish notion with self-torture, or for the purpose of ruining another is declared to be Tamasic (19).
"That alms (gift) which is given knowing it to be a duty to give to one who does no service in return, in a fit place and time, to a worthy person, that alms is said to be Sattvic (20). That gift which is given with a view to receiving in return or looking for the fruit or again reluctantly that gift is held to be Rajasic (21). That gift given at a wrong place or time, to unworthy per-sons, without respect and with insult, that is declared to be Tamasic" (22).

CHAPTER XVIII

The Yoga of Liberation by Renunciation

(Moksha Sannyasa Yoga)

Arjuna said: "I desire to know severally, O mighty-armed, the essence of Sannyasa, O Hrishikesa, as also Tyaga, O Kesinisudana (slayer of Kesi)" (1).
The Blessed Lord said: "Sages understand 'Sannyasa' to be the renouncing of works with desires; the wise declare the abandonment of the fruits of all works as 'Tyaga' (2). Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished, but should be performed; sacrifice, gift, and also austerity are the purifiers of the wise (5).
"These five causes, O mighty-armed, know thou from Me as declared in the Sankhya system for the accomplishment of all actions (13). The body, the actor, the various organs, the several functions of various sorts and the presiding deities also, the fifth (14). He who is free from the notion of egoism, whose intellect is not affected (by good or evil), though he kills these people, he kills not, nor is bound by the action (17).
"An action which is ordained, done without love or hatred by one not desirous of the fruit and free from attachment, is declared to be Sattvic (21). But that action which is done by one longing for desires or again with egoism or with much effort, is declared to be Rajasic (24). The action which is undertaken from delusion, without regarding the consequence, loss of wealth, injury (to others) and one's own ability, that is declared to be Tamasic (25).

"That which knows the paths of action and renunciation, what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, fear and fearlessness, bondage and liberation, that intellect, O Partha, is Sattvic (30). That by which one wrongly understands right (Dharma) and wrong (Adharma), and also what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, that intellect, O Partha, is Rajasic (31). That which enveloped in darkness regards wrong (Adharma) as right (Dharma) and sees all things in a perverted light, that intellect, O Partha, is Tamasic (32).
"That which is like poison at first but like nectar in the end; that happiness is said to be Sattvic, born of the blissful knowledge of the Self (37). That pleasure which arises from the contact of the senses with their objects, at first like nectar but in the end like poison, that is declared to be Rajasic (38). That pleasure which both at first and afterwards is delusion of the Self, arising from sleep; indolence and heedlessness, that is declared to be Tamasic (39).
"Dwelling in solitude, eating but little, speech, body and mind controlled, ever engaged in meditation and concentration, taking refuge in dispassion (52), having abandoned egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger, covetousness, freed from the notion of 'mine' and peaceful, he is fit for becoming Brahman (53). Becoming Brahman, tranquil-minded, he neither grieves nor desires the same to all beings, he attains supreme devotion to Me (54). By devotion he knows Me in reality. what and who I am; then having known Me in reality, he forthwith enters into the Supreme (55).
"The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, causing all beings, by His Maya, to revolve as if mounted on a machine (61). Take refuge in Him with all thy heart, O Bharata; by His grace thou shalt attain supreme peace and the eternal abode (62).
"Fix thy mind in Me, be My devotee, sacrifice to Me, bow down to Me, thou shalt reach Myself; truly do I promise unto thee, for thou art dear to Me (65). Abandoning all duties take refuge in Me alone; I will liberate thee from all sins; grieve not (66).
Has this been heard by thee, O Partha, with an attentive mind? Has thy delusion caused by ignorance been destroyed, O Dhananjaya?" (72).
Arjuna said: "My delusion is destroyed, and I have gained knowledge through Thy grace, O Achyuta (O Immutable One), I am firm; my doubts have vanished. I will do according to Thy word" (73).
Wherever is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, wherever is Partha, the archer, there are prosperity, victory, happiness and sound policy, so I think (78).

Hari Om Tat Sat.

Om Santi!Santi!Santi!

Lessons from the Gita

WHY WAS GITA TAUGHT ON THE BATTLEFIELD?

Critics of the Bhagavad Gita have often contended that it is highly improbable that neither could

Sri Krishna have been in a mood to teach nor Arjuna in a mood to listen to a 700-Sloka long discourse on Yoga and Vedanta on the field of battle at the very commencement of the war, when everyone's mind was full of thoughts relating to warfare itself and about the possible outcome of the conflict. On this score they have suggested that the Gita should be an interpolation, thrust into the Great Epic by a zealous Yoga-propagandist who should have seen in such a procedure the easiest method of immortalising the doctrine of the Gita, as he should have known that Mahabharata itself would be forever looked upon as the treasure-house of wisdom. Doubtless, the occasion chosen for the Great Teaching seems, prima facie, very inopportune. As it actually turned out to be, in spite of the spectacular way in which the Lord brought home the lessons of the Gita to Arjuna (e.g., the Visvarupa-Darsana), Arjuna soon forgot all about it! Towards the close of the Krishna-Avatara, Arjuna again asks Krishna to teach him. This clearly implies that Krishna did not so much wish to teach the Gita to Arjuna, but to humanity as a whole, specially to the peoples of the Kali Yuga. We should remember that the Gita was revealed by the Lord on the eve of the onset of Kali Yuga. Moreover, we find in the Vibhuti Yoga Adhyaya that Krishna specifically mentions that Arjuna among the Pandavas has His Amsa. It is quite improbable that such a great soul would have of his own accord collapsed faint-heartedly at the sight of his kinsmen in battle array, unless the Lord Himself willed it so, in order to make Arjuna an instrument for the Gita-revelation; in the latter case no doubt we have strong reason to suppose that it was because Arjuna was His own Amsa that the Lord chose him to be the channel for the Gitopadesa. He could have made no better choice. Further, we find from Lord Krishna's first words in the Gita that He actually prompted Arjuna to faint! The Lord gave him the powerful psychological suggestion which obviously made his head reel. Arjuna asks Krishna to place the chariot at a point from which he could see "those who have assembled here for the battle, desirous of war, at the instigation of the wicked Kauravas." The dutiful charioteer obeys His 'master's' instructions; but, He skillfully gives the suggestion that would make Arjuna grieve over the prospect of the war itself! He says: "O Arjunal See there Bhishma, Drona and others. Studying the Gita further on, we see how Arjuna's mind slowly but surely and completely got enveloped by this strong, powerful and Divine suggestion. Whereas throughout the first Chapter he lays the greatest stress on the evil of killing kinsmen, he finds that the Lord's mysterious veiling power slowly fills him the way He willed it! When at the beginning of the second Chapter, the Lord smilingly (surely He would have smiled at the good work done by His own words!)

admonished Arjuna for the faintheartedness. Arjuna reveals that the Lord's power had had its fullest effect on his mind; he says: 'How can I kill Bhishma and Drona, the worshipful sires?' mentioning just the two persons whom the Lord prominently hinted at. It is significant that it was only after this second and complete collapse that the Lord chose to discourse upon the Immortality of the Soul, and not at the very first sign of faint-heartedness.

Now, taking that the Lord, in His Infinite Mercy for the peoples of Kali Yuga wanted to deliver the Message of the Gita through Arjuna, could He not have done this at a more opportune moment? -for instance, when the Pandavas were in the forest (a forest is traditionally the best place for the practice and preaching of Yoga!)? Or could there have been any particular reason for His choosing the battlefield for teaching the Gita to Arjuna?

If we ponder the Lilas of Lord Krishna, we find that He did nothing without a deep significance; even His playfulness had a great purpose hidden behind it. He had the supreme knack of teaching great lessons to simple folk very often in a clownish way or through his childish pranks! The mischievous baby would eat dirt and when the Mother chided Him, He would display in His mouth the entire universe! The Nourisher of the three worlds (Krishna) would feign great hunger and would crave even for a grain of rice, and by eating it, mysteriously appease the hunger of the fiery Durvasa and his hosts! We could easily say that there was not a single act of Lord Krishna, as a babe, as a young boy, as a youth, as a statesman, as a shepherd, or as a charioteer, which did not have a deep philosophic import.

May it be that there was some meaning in His choosing the battlefield for the Gita-teachings? Yes: He wanted to point out to us that wisdom should not recline on the arm-chair. If his wisdom did not accompany a man to the field of battle, it was no wisdom at all! Any man could talk philosophy after dinner; any man could discourse upon the most intricate points in the Yoga Sastras, sitting comfortably near the fireplace. But that is no wisdom at all: it is lip-service to the Supreme Science of Knowledge of the Self. It is hypocrisy. These people generally fail when they face a trial, when their wisdom is put to the acid test of practical demonstration, when they find themselves in a crisis.

Krishna's Panchajanya roars a big NO! No, no. That is not wisdom; real wisdom will serve you right in the battlefield, right in a crisis, and will enable you to surmount the obstacle, resist the temptation, arise victoriously from the trial. You will convert the trial into a great opportunity for revealing your genius. For, genius is often made by crisis.

A strong character will not succumb to tests and temptations, however, strong and powerful they may be. On the contrary, a strong character reveals its strength only at the time of such crisis. A morally weak man talks philosophy when things are getting on the way he wishes them to; but his philosophy takes leave of him at the sight of a test. But a morally strong man may give no indication whatsoever of his strength in ordinary times; when a great trial faces him, he reacts most surprisingly and reveals his character.

That is what, we, as Sadhakas, understand from Krishna's choice of the platform for His discourse. It is as it were a fitting prelude to the great Yoga of Equanimity that He was about to preach through Arjuna to the entire humanity.

THE CHARACTERS OF THE GITA

And the lessons that they teach

I

The great Acharyas have (most of them) commenced their Gita-Bhashya from the second Chapter of the Gita as they have considered that the real Gita-teaching commences there. Even others have given very little attention to the first Chapter. If we closely study the first Chapter, we will find that it contains many object lessons for a Sadhaka. Every one of the main characters that plays a role in the Great Gita Drama has a lesson to teach us. Let us then turn to them.

Strangely enough Dhritarashtra opens the Immortal Song. Dhritarashtra was already blind. He had before the commencement of the war his life's chance of eyesight which Vyasa offered him if he desired to witness the war. A reluctance to see his children killed in battle made him refuse the loving offer of the Sage. Moha (deluded attachment) made him revel in blindness! We are by birth enveloped by the veil of ignorance. Life itself offers us opportunities galore of restoring the eyesight of wisdom to us. But Moha (deluded attachment) to 'I' and 'mine* further blinds us; it almost makes us feel that the blindness of ignorance is better and a happier state than the light of wisdom.

But, then, why should Dhritarashtra be accorded this honour of opening the Gita? He and Sanjaya claim our first attention the moment we take up the Gita!

What does Dhritarashtra do? He turns to Sanjaya for knowledge. 'Sanjaya' is one who has conquered his senses, and his mind. Here, perhaps, we have the great lesson.

Every embodied being finds himself helplessly enveloped by the darkness of ignorance and bound by the ropes of delusion (Moha). He has to turn to 'Sanjaya', i.e., he has to bring his senses and the mind under perfect control. Then commences the process of knowledge.

We should not forget that Sanjaya had a divine vision- the supernatural vision- with which he was able to 'see' what was going on in the battlefield though he was far away from it; he was even able to read the minds of the warriors! This phenomenon tells us that if we choose to turn to Sanjaya, i.e., if we bring our senses and our mind under perfect control, we shall acquire the inner vision, the intuitive perception, which is our guide to Self-Knowledge. Even as the wicked Dhritarashtra was able to hear the Gita-teaching through the good offices of Sanjaya; we, too, shall be able to acquire Supreme Knowledge through a self-controlled Buddhi, through the eye of intuition.

II

Both Duryodhana and Arjuna reached the verge of collapse before the commencement of the war. Duryodhana approached his Acharya (Drona) with tremulous voice and quaking limbs and complained that his numerically superior army was inadequate compared to the strength of the enemy.
Arjuna, too, displayed, faint-heartedness at the sight of his kith and kin and refused to kill them. Let us take a closer look at them.
Duryodhana was afraid. His conscience pricked him. The unrighteousness of his past conduct and present intentions robbed him of his Kshatriya valour. Piteously he bleated before Drona and bewailed his fear.
Arjuna had no such fear. He was not worried that his army would suffer defeat, in spite of its numerical inferiority. His cause was prima face righteous. What troubled his heart was: 'am I to kill my kith and kin, the grandsire and the Acharya, though they provoked the combat and were obviously prepared to be slain?' Compassion and a false sense of duty, or rather Dharma-Sankata (confusion as to the real duty) overtook him.
Duryodhana illustrates a principle: unrighteousness engenders fear in the heart. An unrighteous man, even though strong and powerful, is crippled by fright. Even here his strength is of no avail to him. He dies many times before his death.
Arjuna, on the other hand, is a typical example of an aspirant at the threshold of renunciation. He is righteous; his aims are also righteous. But he is confused. On the one hand, there is the Vyavaharika Dharma (his duty to the world) and on the other there is the Paramarthika Dharma (his duty to his own transcendental soul, i.e., Self-realisation). The two seem to be mutually conflicting and contradictory. Confusion arises in the mind. Misplaced sympathy, wrong notions of all sorts, assail him. He collapses. This mental struggle continues til the Supreme Knowledge is obtained and the very existence of the world denied by the Jnani. Then there is only the Paramarthika Dharma; the haunting shadow of the Vyavaharika Dharma vanishes.
That is one reason why Arjuna was chosen to be the Gita-disciple. It is only the aspirant who is thus on the horns of a dilemma that needs and that will heed spiritual instruction. Neither a worldly man to whom this world is the ultimate reality and his duties and obligations to himself and 'his' the ultimate Dharma, nor a Jnani to whom the world is a mere nothing (an illusory product of a Nothing called Maya) and the Self alone is Real, can derive any benefit out of the Lord's teaching in the Gita. It is only the disciple "on the threshold" unable to decide whether to go forward or to remain behind, that needs positive command. Therefore, I feel that the Gita is of the greatest spiritual import to the aspirant who stands at the brink of the world, unable to decide whether to renounce or not.

III

Krishna! What have You to teach us?

Why did You take up the reins if it is not to teach us that the truly great are the really humble, that he who would wish to be in tune with the Infinite would be the embodiment of devotion to duty, selfless, egoless and indifferent to praise, honour, pleasure or success?
If You had not vowed to bear arms, You could even then remained as a Divine Spectator, giving lordly directions to the Pandavas. But, no: You accepted to be Arjuna's charioteer; You put

Yourself in such a position where Arjuna had to 'command' You to drive the chariot hither and thither, where You had to give the horses a bath in the evening, attend to their feeding, etc. Lord of the Three Worlds! Truly blessed are they who understand the Mystery of Thy Action and cultivate real humility.
Real humility is the sign of great strength, supreme knowledge and perfect renunciation. Humility is not for the weak and the ignorant. In fact, arrogance and pride are the surest signs of internal weakness and ignorance. The mind of the weak subconsciously rises in arrogance and vanity in order to counteract its own weakness! The poor man wants at least to pretend to be great!!
Not so the wise, the truly great, who, like Lord Krishna would be humble, noble, egoless and devoted to their duty.
Bless us, O Lord!

DURYODHANA VS. ARJUNA

ON THE SPIRITUAL WAR-FRONT

When, before the commencement of the Kurukshetra War, Duryodhana felt his heart sinking within him at the sight of the Pandava Army (inferior in numerical strength and exceptional valour, compare Bhishma, the mightiest, Drona the great teacher, Karna the invincible to his own), he instinctively sought the Acharya, Drona. What did Drona do? He could not give false hopes to Duryodhana. He could not tell him: "Take heart, O king! You will win, for your cause is righteous and it is your duty to fight." Drona's silence was the best answer. Yet, Duryodhana was virtually the king; and Drona had loyalty at heart. "To cheer him up," Drona blew the conch. That was the best that could be done in the circumstances.
Could he not have delivered a grand discourse, a Drona Gita, dissuading Duryodhana from his wonted course, making a last minute attempt to save the terrible bloodshed and destruction of the race? Obviously, Drona knew his disciple! The wicked man bent on wickedness, confirmed in his own wicked notions and evil designs, is in no mood to listen to a sermon on righteousness. Often in spite of themselves the elders had to speak out their heart... to their own disgrace and disadvantage, for everyone Duryodhana only retorted violently, called them traitors eating his salt and favouring Pandavas. The Kauravas' wickedness had reached its natural limit; and Bhishma, Drona and other wise men on the Kaurava side knew that beyond that limit lay complete destruction, inevitable ruin. Knowing the course of unrighteous, therefore, the wise Drona kept silent and blew the conch. The conduct of these noble ones (e.g., Bhishma and Drona) in sticking to the Kauravas, with the fullest knowledge of the outcome of the battle, is a monumental example of loyalty.
Now, let us take Arjuna's case. He was confused by compassion--misplaced compassion, as the Lord Himself assures him, Asochyaan Anvasochastvam. He, too, turns to the Wise One (in his case it turned out to be the Lord Himself) for guidance. What does He do? The Lord smiles:

obviously, to rouse Arjuna's nobility to greater heights, nobility in the Vyavaharic sense. We have seen how Krishna Himself gave the 'suggestion' for Arjuna's despondency by pointedly referring to Bhishma and Drona. He waited till Arjuna reacted fully to that suggestion. In the meantime, He merely kindled the fire by a derisive smile and the few derisive words: "Pooh! You got nervous at the mere sight of the enemy!" The Lord's spell then envelops Arjuna. He reacts wonderfully to the Lord's suggestion. In other words, he had put his mind in exactly the same frame as the Lord wanted him to. The Wise Man (Arjuna) who but a moment before had occupied the position of a teacher of Dharma now crouched beneath the Lord's feet as a humble disciple. He who categorically refused to act, now asked for guidance. He who was argumentative, prayed for commands. From Arjuna the friend emerged Arjuna the disciple, the aspirant, the seeker. The intelligence in which he prided himself but a moment before, he now considers "confusion of mind." He boasted his knowledge of the Sastras; now he confesses ignorance of his Dharma THAT is the time; that is the attitude of mind; that is the mark of the seeker; that is the receptive mood. The Lord procrastinated no more. What He had been waiting for had been brought about. At one stroke He gave Arjuna the greatest wisdom. He who is in a teaching mood is in no mood to receive knowledge. He who is proud of his intelligence has effectively shut the door through which wisdom could enter. He who thinks he knows everything can never be made to feel that needs any more knowledge or wisdom. He will never seek any; wisdom given to him is a dreary waste. The disciple must be prepared beforehand. He must be made into a true disciple, an earnest seeker, an egoless aspirant who could be taught, who could receive what he is taught. Look at the difference between Duryodhana and Arjuna again. All that Duryodhana wants, even in his moment of despondency, is that all the warriors of his army should gather around Bhishma and enable him to achieve victory. In his moment of despondency Arjuna completely forgets everything, the battle, the need to win back the lost kingdom (or, through death on the battlefield, to attain heaven); but he pleads, "Yat sreyassyaannischitam bruhi tan-me." SREYAS can be understood in all its grandeur if we bear in mind the sense in which it is used in the Kathopanishad. Arjuna does not want to pursue the Preyo-Marga (and here we mean not only the pleasant material life on earth, but even attainment of heaven through the performance of the scripturally-enjoined actions, viz., the Yajnas and Karmas of the Karma Kanda); but he asks for instruction on the Sreyo-Marga, the Path that leads to the Supreme. That is the reason why the Lord imparts Atma-Jnana to him, instead of merely telling him that as a Kshatriya it was his bounden duty to fight and that otherwise he would go to hell hereafter. Self-surrender is the mark of a true disciple. The least trace of egoism would frustrate the very object of discipleship and would prevent the aspirant from absorbing the Guru's instruction. "Shaadhi maam tvaan prapannam" is the ideal aspirant's prayer to the Guru. Once this Prapatti- mood is achieved, then the Guru's Grace and Wisdom flows into the aspirant without the least obstruction, let or hindrance.

GRIEVE NOT

It is the suddenness with which Lord Sri Krishna reveals the greatest Truth to Arjuna that confirms our view that Arjuna, surrendering himself completely to the Lord asked for instruction in the Sreyo-Marga, the Path leading to the Supreme Good, i.e., Liberation.
The Lord's previous attitude, one of merely laughing at Arjuna's effeminacy and of instigating him to stand up and fight (the first few Slokas of the Second Chapter) was His response to a disciple who had not yet surrendered himself, who considered himself wise, and who felt that he was himself competent to judge, to decide and to act in accordance with his own will.
The spontaneity with which the Truth was revealed is astonishing. "I surrender myself to Thee, O Lord,' says the disciple. "Fear not. Grieve Not. Sorrow not," says the Divine Guru.

Asochyan Anvasochastvam

In two words the Lord has summed up the entire Creation: 'Gatasun' 'Agatasun'-that which is within your view, all that is beyond your view; the entire Creation. About no one need we grieve. Nothing should worry us. We should sorrow over nothing.
Read this Sloka along with the other great Sloka occurring at the end of the Gita: "Sarvadharman Parityajya Mamekam Saranam Vraja; Aham Tva Sarvapapebhyo Mokshayishyami Ma Suchah." You get the central teaching of the Gita.
In effect the Lord says: "Why do you falsely imagine that the burden is on your shoulders? It is on Mine. I am the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. In fact, the entire Creation has come out of Me. I pervade the entire Creation as its very soul. All that goes on here is My Life. You, too, are part of My play. You are one of the dummy actors in this Drama. You exist at the end of My string, to dance to My tune. Surrender yourself unto Me.
You will be ever joyful. Give up this egoistic notion. You will never grieve. I will liberate you; you cannot achieve even liberation through your own efforts. Remember this and get over your delusion."
Self-surrender and renunciation are synonymous terms.
One can never surrender himself to Him without first renouncing all shades of egoism. And Gita is the science which teaches us the true renunciation. Wherever the Lord says "fight," if you substitute "renounce,' , you will get what the Gita teaches us. Our battle is battle with the senses and the mind, with the various attachments and cravings with I -ness and mine-ness, with Kartritva and Bhoktritva Abhimana (the notions that "I am the doer; I am the enjoyer"). To conquer them is to renounce them. In such renunciation is bliss, peace and Immortality, Liberation.

THE MAN YOU HATE IS YOUR OWN SELF!

During the course of His instruction on the nature of the Self, the Lord gives us a beautiful smile, "Just as the same person undergoes the various stages of life, childhood, youth, manhood, old age, he changes over from one body to another. There is nothing to grieve in this.
Let us try to concretise this illustration. Take the case of a great military commander, e.g., Hitler. He makes history by certain actions (good or bad). He becomes the father of some doctrines,

various 'Isms'. He dies. No one can say with what last thought-form he dies. In accordance with that he takes birth again in this world, to reap the fruits of his actions. Let us suppose that he is again born and grows up to become a soldier.
He might become famous. He might rise to be as great a leader as Hitler was. But, he might feel jealous of Hitler's achievements; or he might hate even the thought of Hitler's doctrines. How silly it is on the face of it!
Looking back at our own past, we may have regrets at our own mistakes. We may entertain happy memories of all the good things of the past. But none except a maniac or lunatic would really hate his childhood, or feel jealous of his own youth. Because he actually knows that in effect he hates himself or feels jealous of himself; and he knows that it is absurd.
It is as absurd to hate any person on earth. It is as absurd to feel jealous of any one on earth. The very same Principle that seems to undergo the various changes of childhood, youth, manhood and old age, undergoes other changes and puts on other garbs, too. 'Dehantaraprapti' means 'attainment of other bodies.' Our own self puts on the garb of all the innumerable creatures on the earth and in the whole creation. If you feel jealous of any one, if you hate any one, if you entertain any wrong emotions towards any one, know that you entertain those emotions to your own yesterday's self, your own self in other garbs.
The wrong emotion will not last even a split-second.

THE SPIRIT IS OUR FIRST CONSIDERATION

There is something unique in the manner in which the Lord handles the situation created by Arjuna's collapse. The moment Arjuna revealed that he was in the proper frame of mind to receive the Lord's teachings, He gave him the highest wisdom, the wisdom of the Self, the Imperishable Absolute.

Na Jayate Mriyate Va Kadachit Nayam Bhutva Bhavita Va Na Bhuyah; Ajo Nityah Sasvatoyam Purano Na Hanyate Hanyamane Sarire.

The highest Ajati-Vada is taught here. No doubt it is one of the arguments advanced by the Lord to induce Arjuna to fight. But what an argument!
After thus appealing to Arjuna's spirit and instilling into it the highest Truth, the Lord descends into Arjuna's intellect with a view to convincing him there, too. "Even if you think that the Atman is subject to birth and death, will you have nothing to worry yourself about; for that which is born must die, that which has been created has to be destroyed." It is useless to worry about circumstances over which we have no control. Thus the Lord appeals to Arjuna's intellect, too, and silences it.
The Spirit and the intellect have been convinced; but that is not all! The task must be completed in every detail. That is Krishna all over.
The Lord, therefore, appeals to his sense of vanity and to his sense of duty.

Svadharmam Api Cha Avekshya Na Vikampitum Arhasi, Dharmyaddhi Yuddhat Sreyonnyat Kshatriyasya Na Vidyate.

And, still "lower" down:

Akirtim Chapi Bhutani Kathayishyanti Te Avyayam, Sambhavitasya Chakirtir Maranadatirichyate.

Nindanstava Samarthyam....

The wise preceptor does not leave his disciple in this kind of gloom, at the bottom of the pit of despair or threat of ignominy. The disciple might completely succumb to it. So Krishna at once gives His "positive" master-strokes. The "negative" side of His teaching had done its work. It had brought home to Arjuna the futility of his attitude towards his kith and kin. Without losing a moment, Krishna switches over to the positive mode of approach, and now tells him what he should do.
"Hatho Va Prapsyasi Svargam; Jitva Va Bhokshyase Mahim." In either case, you do not lose at all! This forms the opening of a series of positive commands. It is as it were the preamble to the Discourse on Buddhi-Yoga- the Yoga of the Bhagavad Gita.

THE TECHNIQUE OF BUDDHI-CULTURE

Buddhi-Yoga

The description of the Immortality of the Atman was itself a prelude, as it were, to the grand Buddhi-Yoga which the Lord had essayed upon Himself to teach to Arjuna.
I have so far dealt with the intellectual analysis of Discrimination; now hear Me expound the Yoga of Discrimination, (or rather the Yoga of Buddhi-Culture or the Union of Buddhi with the Self)."
Why? Because if you practise this Buddhi-Yoga, you will snap the bonds of Karma and liberate yourself. Karma by itself is neither binding nor liberating; but it is your attitude, your motive, the mode of your Buddhi that is either binding or liberating. For, the senses and the mind are by themselves, are inert, incapable of any action, except in the light provided by Buddhi. Normally the Buddhi is in active conjunction with the senses. It supplies the motive-force. When this Buddhi is inturned towards the Self, when it achieves the union with the Actionless Self, then

this motive-force gradually ceases. Actions performed by the mind and the senses (owing to past momentum or the mere play of the Prakriti) do not bind the Jiva to Samsara.
When the Prarabdha comes to an end there is an automatic liberation of the Jiva; there is no rebirth.
It might take a long time to achieve the complete detachment of the Buddhi from the mind and the senses. But once you apply yourself to this Buddhi Culture, once you make your Buddhi feel that the joy it seeks lies in its union with the Self within, it will turn more and more inwards. There is no loss at all in the Sadhana, no retrogression. Progress may be slow or rapid; but progress you will, and every fresh conquest over attachment to senses and sense-objects will hasten the perfection of Buddhi-Yoga.
But you should strive. You should sincerely culture the Buddhi. Here the Lord compares the Sadhaka to an agriculturist. Mark the one-pointed concentration with which the agriculturist applies his energies to the cultivation; with the one thought of getting the richest harvest, he prepares the field, he sows, he nourishes the young plant, he waters it regularly, he removes the weeds that grow around it, and tends to it till the time of the harvest protecting it from birds and beasts. Such should be your attitude. Till you attain the goal-Self-realisation, you should have only that thought uppermost in your mind, and whatever you do should be with that one thought alone.
Desire is the great thief who will rob you of your Buddhi. Beware of him. Desire for the fruits of the actions you perform at once draws the Buddhi away from the Self within and ties it with the mind and the senses. There arises bondage to the senses and their objects. This is a great obstacle to the Buddhi-Yoga Samadhi.
Care not for the fruits of actions. For, they are the mirage that lures you away from your path Buddhi-Yoga. But, let not your dread of attachment to Karma-Phala induce you to refrain from all actions. For, you cannot sit idle even for a second. Whether you like it or not, ceaseless action is your lot, till you liberate yourself from this relentless wheel of transmigration, through the diligent practice of Buddhi-Yoga, detaching the Buddhi from the mind and the senses. Dread of action is only a sign that, whilst the Buddhi is still in conjunction with the mind and senses (driven outwards by the force of Vasanas and Trishnas latent in the mind) and shares their cravings, it wishes to escape the consequences of action! This is quite obviously an obstacle to Buddhi-Yoga. Buddhi-Yoga is neither desire-prompted activity nor fearborn inactivity; but it is an active practice of Sakshi-Bhava.
The greatest characteristic of this ineffable state is equanimity, a peace that surpasseth all understanding. Is this peace the peace of an inert stone? No, it is not the peace of the graveyard. It is an active bliss-peace born of communion with God, the fountain-source of Peace, Power and Bliss. Peace should not be mistaken for inertia and dejection of spirit; Sattva should not be mistaken for Tamas; and selfless service should not be mistaken for soulless service.
Forget not that the Buddhi-Yogi is in conscious contact with the Supreme Power within himself. Absence of mental commotion and riot of senses help clear thinking and efficient action. The Yogi is an expert at his job. He is a master of the art of life itself. In fact, only he lives; others only exist.

PERFECTION IN BUDDHI-YOGA

Now, we come to the description of one who has attained perfection in the Buddhi-Yoga. Bhagavan had insisted that the Buddhi-Yogi would not evade action, would not shirk his responsibilities, would not run away from the world, would not seek an easy way of escape from what is generally known as the burden of life. He will, on the contrary, face them. He will conquer them by the unique Buddhi-Yoga which the Gita teaches. He will, in a word, let his mind and senses work in the light of the Buddhi that ever remains in the communion with the Lord within the heart. The Buddhi is then filled with Sattva; therefore, his thoughts are Sattvic- pure, noble and divine.

Buddhi-Yoga is the fulfilment of all desires; therefore, the Yogi is desireless. This is the most important characteristic of the Buddhi-Yogi and therefore this fact is stressed both at the commencement and at the conclusion of this description of the Sthithaprajna by the Lord.

The desireless man, by virtue of his desirelessness itself, is freed from the pairs of opposites. What is Duhkha if not the sequel of the non-fructification of desires? What is Sukha if not the gratification of desires? When desires do not exist, therefore, neither Sukha nor Duhkha exist. The Buddhi-Yogi receives the sense-impressions as mere sense-impressions without designating them, without labelling them Duhkha and Sukha.

When this designating ceases, then Raga-Desha completely ceases. No object gives him pain; none gives him pleasure either. Therefore he has no likes and dislikes. Raga-Dvesha and Suhkha-Duhkha are co-eval and co-existent. One dies at the death of the other. This vicious circle is broken by the Buddhi-Yogi abruptly by the technique of Buddhi-Yoga.

But, this Buddhi-Yoga is not so easy as it might appear at first sight. The Indriyas have been endowed with a naturally outgoing tendency; that is the work of Avidya into which man has been born to release himself through Buddhi-Yoga. The power of Avidya is so great that it requires a greater amount of divine wisdom to prevent its functioning. Even when the Sadhaka is endeavouring to control the senses and the mind and to unite the Buddhi with the Lord within, he will often find that a moment's laxity gives time enough for the Indriyas to draw away the mind and the Buddhi outward to objective enjoyments. Seemingly, there is a loss of effort; but further effort soon places the Sadhaka on the firm ground of spiritual progress once again. The aspirant would do well to be vigilant till the last stage of Buddhi-Yoga.

To enable him to do this, the Lord gives two distinct stages in his spiritual progress. One is where the senses have been starved by strenuous Abhyasa of Buddhi-Yoga. Continuous exercise of discrimination, constant Vichara have endowed the Sadhaka with a certain amount of control over the mind and the senses. The senses do not run after the objects now. They are comparatively quiet. But that is not all. There is a residual potency at that time; the capacity is left behind to enjoy the objects. The taste lingers, even when the craving has been destroyed. Whereas there is no longing for an object in its absence, yet there is a capacity to enjoy it when it presents itself.

This capacity might often assume the form of a subtle desire also. If allowed to grow, it might once again assume mightier proportions. Therefore, the aspirant should not relax his vigilance even at this stage. It is when there is complete merger of the Buddhi in the Lord, when there is a complete extinction of the individual ego-sense, that the Sadhaka is completely free from even

this taste of enjoyment. The first is the negative state of restraint; the second is the positive state of Self-realisation.

Bhagavan gives us a clear analysis of the process of downfall in order that we might avoid it altogether, that we might beware even at the first sign of spiritual tragedy. Here again the part Buddhi plays in achieving complete success in Yoga is clearly brought out. Says the Lord: "When the man thinks of the objects, there arises an attachment to them." The Buddhi which the Sadhaka should constantly aim at keeping in union with the Self is drawn out. There arises a desire for enjoying that object. Then likes and dislikes manifest themselves fully. The Buddhi, torn between the senses, is deluded and confused. The person perishes, i.e., he entirely loses sight of his goal, and is led astray. Again we notice what great importance the Lord attaches to the proper culture of Buddhi. It is through Buddhi-Yoga that man rises to Godhead; it is through Buddhi-Nasa (destruction of Buddhi) that he suffers ruination.

In order that the Sadhaka may not come by such a set back in his Sadhana, the Lord gives a graphic description of his duty. Just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell, the Sadhaka should withdraw the senses into himself and offer his Buddhi to the Lord within. The mind will no doubt run out again and again; and gradually should he restrain its outward activities and make it introvert. (Vide chapter VI)

Incidentally, it is amusing to note how Krishna pays Arjuna back in his own coin. At the close of the first chapter, Arjuna, when he prided himself in his knowledge of Sastras, gave the Adharma-chain and logically explained to the Lord how engaging in the war would surely result in the destruction of the whole race and of his own self. In a strikingly similar way, the Lord brings home to him that it is not by engaging himself in battle that such a catastrophe would result, but the Vishaya-Chintana, Anatma-Chintana, by wrong mental attitude, by not practising of Buddhi-Yoga. Very beautifully, the Lord points out to Arjuna that Dharma and Adharma are within man and not to be sought in external happenings. In other words, Bhagavan says: "Your line of argument is deluded phantasy; now hear Me expound Dharma." Krishna was a humourist!

In conclusion, Bhagavan again stresses the supreme need of rooting out all desires. Desires should not be suppressed but fulfilled, fulfilled but not gratified. The Sadhaka should, by constant practice of Buddhi-Yoga, by constant Vichara, convince himself that real Bliss is within himself, that all that he seeks outside is in reality within himself. The course of desire itself would be changed now. His desires will flow inward now. He will find a fulfilment of all his desires in his own self. That is the condition in which he will experience Supreme Peace. If he remains in such a peaceful state till the end of his present incarnation, he will attain the Supreme State of Brahman.

TO WORK OR NOT TO WORK

A problem that has baffled the minds of the best thinkers and philosophers through the ages has been the correct relation of action to Realisation. Ceaseless has been the debate over this issue, one section holding that action with its inevitable reaction could only lead to bondage, Samsara or transmigration; and the other insisting that inaction would lead to sin (and, of

course, consequent transmigration). Lord Sri Krishna calls a truce with His Final Word: "To work is better than not to work. Here He seems to take the side of the Karma Kandis who vigorously denounced renunciation. In fact, He gives a graphic description of how the invisible divine beings (Devas) are related to mortals here on earth by Yajna. Devas shower their blessings on a society that propitiates them with Yajna. Therefore, work is necessary. Life would be impossible here without activity of some sort; therefore, work is necessary. All created beings are governed by the Law of Three Gunas of Prakriti, whose interplay compels action; therefore, no one can, even for a second, remain inactive. Moreover, man is fond of imitating others. Everyone follows the leader. Everyone is a leader of some group of people or other, whether it be a political party, religious sect, commercial association, social group, or at least his own family members. Laziness is infectious. And, laziness would inevitably lead to national ruin. Therefore, everyone should be active if only to set an example to others and thus to prevent national degradation. But, hardly a few minutes before this the Lord had emphatically condemned the low aspirations of those who, through the performance of rituals, desired to attain Heaven "All the Vedas are circumscribed by the Three Gunas; be thou above them!" He commanded. Now does He not reverse His decision? No; He explains it! A marvellous new interpretation is given by the Lord to the word 'Yajna' and that reconciles the contradiction. It is Yajna that saves man from bondage! Actions bind man to Samsara; Yaina releases him. And this Yajna is not a religious rite, but a spirit to pervade every one of your actions. The ritualistic Yajna (the fire-oblation) is itself symbolic. Whilst offering the things that he loves most into the fire and seeing them burnt to ashes, man develops a detachment, an inner feeling that nothing is lost as the Devas are propitiated thereby. This detachment and this spirit of charity are to pervade every one of our daily actions. Give. Give. And give yet more share whatever you have with those that need it. Your wealth, your knowledge, your strength, and the love of your heart, are there for you to share them with all; for you to offer them as glorious oblations in this Eternal Transcendental Fire of Brahma- Karma, i.e., the entire creation. The man who offers an oblation of ghee into the fire does not expect that the fire would give back the ghee to him. But he expects that a rich reward would await him in another region, viz., Heaven. Similarly, you, when you work, when you serve, when you give, should not expect to be rewarded here in other words, your actions should be perfectly detached and desireless- and a rich reward awaits you in a subtler plane here itself! That reward is Self-realisation. This is the Yajna that is a perfect blend of the Karma Kanda and the Jana Kanda. Here the person is inactive while ceaselessly acting! He knows that all actions belong to Nature. He knows that it is the Lord's Will that impels everyone to act. He, therefore, does not feel that he is the doer. When this attitude is developed and perfected, the actions do not really emanate from him but from Him, the Supreme Lord who is ever intent on the welfare of all His children. Why is He so active? Why was He ever active when He took birth here in this world as a human being? That is the Sacrifice of the Supreme, Almighty, All-merciful Lord, our Father, Mother and all. Remember: Creation itself is the Lord's Sacrifice. The Lord sacrifices Himself into this infinite multiplicity. Protection of this Creation involves a further sacrifice on His part. He sacrifices His

transcendence and comes down as Avataras. And, while here He works ceaselessly, His life itself is a long sacrifice.
So do the Great Ones here busy themselves for Lokasamgraha. They renounce all actions into Him; they know that He is the real doer, they are not. Wonder of wonders: even these Great Ones seem to be doing the very same things that the ignorant men do; but inwardly they are detached. That makes all the difference. They do not disturb anyone's belief, but guide each one from vigorous action to Supreme Inaction.
What have these Great Ones to achieve by their actions? They have to gain nothing more. They have attained Self-realisation, the Supremest Gain. They are self-satisfied; they delight in their own Self. Need they do any action? (Gita III, 17-18)
And, this wonderful utterance of the Lord has two meanings. The actions of such a Great One are not motivated by any selfish desire. They are one with the Lord; and their actions, too, share His Self-sacrificing Service of Protection and Creation. They do not act; but He acts through them. They are free from desire and egoism; and therefore, they are not bound by the actions. On the contrary, their actions tend to liberate not only themselves but other Jivas, too.
They go on doing this till one day, their personality is completely 'lost' or merged in the Infinite, they withdraw themselves totally from phenomena, transcend all Gunas, go beyond Creation itself and remain in absolute communion with the Self, the Brahman and while awaiting the dissolution of the physical sheath, they have no need to do anything.

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

What is sin, if nothing happens here but the Will of God?
There is a similar question that those who have academically studied Vedanta ask: 'What is meant by attainment of Atma-Jnana or God-realisation when God is ever present everywhere and He alone is?
God-realisation constitutes realising God. The self-luminous God has not been realised by the deluded Jiva blinded by ignorance. He has only to open his eyes to attain that Jana to know that God is ever present everywhere and that He alone is.
Similarly it is the ignorance that the Will of God alone is done in the universe that constitutes sin. For, this forgetfulness leads to desire; desire to anger; anger to confusion of Buddhi; and this in turn cuts loose the senses and the mind to play havoc. Not that the wicked man can thus alter the Divine Will in the least; but he is lost in the snare of sensuality, of ignorance, of Raga-Dvesha, of desire and anger.
There cannot be a better illustration of this great truth than the 'plot' chosen by the Lord to enact the Gita-Dharma. The Mahabharata war was about to begin. It was the Lord's Will. Those who realised that it was so e.g., Bhishma-would attain Liberation from Samsara even though they might have engaged themselves in the terrible carnage. Those who did not realise this truth, those who thought that they fought, those who had motives other than doing the Will of God, knowingly and willingly bound themselves by the chain of Karma.

That is why the Lord warns Arjuna again and again in the Gita: "The congenital nature of a Jnani and a layman will express itself." "Do not neglect your duty, even if it is fraught with apparent sin." "It is better to do one's duty, than to seek to do another's.'

When does a person refuse to do one's duty or seek to take upon himself the duties of another? When he has some motive other than doing the Will of God that has placed him in some circumstances, endowed with some potentialities, blessed him with a particular temperament. He has a base desire, however righteous he may make it look externally. This desire itself is sin; it is the progenitor of countless sins. This man neglects the potentialities and the faculties with which he has been endowed, instead of utilising them to the best advantage for the purification of his heart and doing the Will of God. He aspires to achieve some illusory 'goal'-which is usually some material advantage or, at best, name and fame -by adopting another's function for which he is usually a misfit. Is it hard to understand that he would roll down from ruin to greater ruin?

The story of the saintly butcher to whom the Pativrata directs a half-baked Yogi, which occurs in the Mahabharata, illustrates this truth. The stories of even modern saints are replete with illustrations of this truth. They have clearly demonstrated to us that the performance of one's own duties is itself the doorway to Moksha. Their actions outwardly seem to be very much like those of a layman, but with this essential, all-important, difference: the layman is attached to his actions, the Jnani is detached. An act which is considered one's duty can be more easily and naturally performed with mental detachment, than an act which one wilfully performs out of the promptings of an ambition or a desire. The performance of one's own duty tran-quillises the mind; and the satisfaction that flows from the fulfilment of one's duty washes away the dirt that covers the mind; whereas, ambition and desire that impel one to take on another's duty agitates the mind, makes it more impure, breeds vices and spells ruin.

This demon of desire is seated in the Indriyas, mind and Buddhi. Seated in the Indriyas he seeks to enjoy the objects. Seated in the mind he seeks power and position, name and fame, worldly happiness and pleasure. Seated in the Buddhi he makes it forget the Indwelling Presence, and clouds the power of right discrimination. Seated in this manner he seems to be an all-powerful, invincible foe.

No: Lord Krishna assures that this demon of desire, too can be conquered. Tact is necessary. Wisdom is necessary. Patience is necessary. Then success is assured. First the Indriyas should be controlled. This is done through the practice of Sama, Dama and Titiksha. Then the second fortress of desire--the desire-filled mind--must be attacked. Desire can be eradicated from this fortress with the help of Uparati, Sraddha and Samadhana. Then eradicate desire from the Buddhi itself by means of Mumukshutva (a strong yearning for Liberation).

At the same time cultivate Vairagya and practise Viveka or discrimination. Vairagya and Abhyasa, as Lord Krishna and Patanjali Maharshi emphatically declare, are the only two weapons with which you can bring the mind and senses under your perfect control.

Fear not. Despair not. Be not diffident. Even this seemingly all-powerful enemy of wisdom-desire can be conquered. The senses are greater than sense-objects. The mind is greater than the senses. Buddhi is greater than the mind. But the Self is greater than all. Tat Tvam Asi! Beloved Seeker! Thou art That! Therefore, arise, awake, destroy this great enemy desire, and attain Knowledge of the Self here and now.

May God bless you with Self-knowledge! May you roam about freely as a Jivanmukta in this very birth, nay this very second, is my humble prayer!

WHERE IS GOD?

To Arjuna, Krishna was always a good friend. The Supreme Love that the Lord is, never demanded anything more. When the war began, Krishna became Arjuna's charioteer; and Arjuna assumed the role of the Lord's master. When misplaced mercy shook his heart, Arjuna, from his superior seat flourished before the Almighty his knowledge of the Sastras as the Pandit would before an ignorant one. When the Lord's Sweet Smile dispelled a little of his own ignorance, Arjuna fell on his knees and called himself the Lord's disciple. When the Lord boldly revealed to him the Great Truths that have been recorded in the Second and Third Chapter of the Gita- truths not quite in accordance with his own conceptions of what was right and proper-- a doubt must have arisen in Arjuna's mind: "What is this new philosophy that Krishna is preaching to me? Is it in accordance with the ancient Dharma? Who is Krishna to assert these truths?"

Therefore, at the commencement of the Fourth Chapter of the Gita, the Lord quietly puts in a word: "Arjuna, I taught this Yoga to Lord Surya (the Sun-God)," and then quietly goes on to describe how the all devouring time wore away the splendour of these Truths too. Arjuna is puzzled all the more! "What You, my beloved friend Krishna, You taught the Yoga to the Sun?" He had not yet fully realised that Krishna was the Supreme Para Brahman Himself. Krishna takes advantage of this supreme opportunity to bestow upon His friend-disciple precious knowledge of a Supreme Truth. "Arjuna," says the Lord, "innumerable have been My births and so have been yours. I know them all; you know not." When the Lord comes into, descends into (Avatara), manifestation, He deliberately enters into the realm of His own Maya; when the Jiva takes birth here, it is a helpless plaything of Maya. The former is similar to the case of a Yogi who consciously enters a dark cave for practising meditation; he knows where he is and he knows how to get out of the cave whenever he wills. The latter is similar to the case of a man who is thrown into the cave when he is unconscious under the effect of chloroform. When he wakes up to the consciousness of the external world, he is terror-stricken; he knows not where he is, he knows not how to get out of the cave; even his own attempt to do so proves only painful (he knocks his head here and there in the darkness) and futile till at last he gets the aid of one who has consciously walked into the cave and knows how to get out of it and who, in his mercy, leads the other man also out of it.

"Very well," thinks Arjuna, "but how are we to recognise You?" Few recognised Krishna as God when He lived and played His Human Role on earth. God, when He descends into the world of men, behaves like those around Him often as though He is in lesser power and wisdom. Divinity does shine through all these outer cloaks; but how can we recognise It?

"Arjuna," says the Lord, "whenever unrighteousness threatens to overpower righteousness, I incarnate Myself here in order to protect Dharma, crush Adharma and re-establish righteousness." Bhagavan's Words here deserve to be meditated upon every day, especially

because He promises that "he who truly understands My Birth and My Actions in this world is released from the wheel of birth and death."

Recognise Him as present where a noble one practises Dharma. Recognise Him as incarnate at the holy spot where His Names are sung. Recognise Him in the very person of one who diligently practises the great virtues that sustain life upon earth-virtues like truthfulness, cosmic love, purity, nobility, magnanimity, charity, selflessness. No one knows in which Form He is present; rather, in which Form is He not present? In which being on earth is He not present? He is specially manifest in that Form or that Being that contributes even an iota for the preservation of righteousness. Open your eyes; wake up. See the Lord, Thy God, manifest here before you, re-incarnate before your very eyes in the form of your parents who give you wholesome advice to pursue the path of righteousness, of your Guru who points out to you the Great Goal that is the very source of all righteousness, of all saints and sages, of all the men of God, of all devotees of the Almighty, of all wise men, of all the national and international leaders who work for peace and humanweal. Open your eyes and see the Lord re-incarnate in the cow that silently teaches you selflessness, in the dog that teaches you faithfulness, in the ass that teaches patience and forbearance; the Lord incarnated Himself in Animal-Forms, too, in the previous Yugas in order to warn you not to neglect these manifestations of God, and to awaken us to the truth that from them we can learn a great lesson to guide our life. In the very act of recognising the elements of righteousness, wherever they may exist, the Lord reincarnates here. The righteous thought is God. A divine thought is God. A sublime sentiment is God. A noble, inspiring and elevating word is God. And, the Lord is re-incarnate here in a special form, a potent mass of divine splendour in the spiritual preceptor, in the sage or saint whose very presence on earth dispels the darkness of ignorance and routs out the undivine forces.

Now you realise why the Lord declares that one who knows His Incarnation and His Actions thus is released from the wheel of birth and death. Who would not like to incarnate the Lord in his own heart, in his own mind, in his own soul every day in every way? God exists here in all the divine forces of righteousness. Understanding this, incarnate Him in your heart by keeping your heart pure and divine, in your mind by always thinking sublime thoughts, in your soul by keeping it ever holy, and in your entire being by living for the sake of the preservation and propagation of Dharma. Know it for certain that you will here and now, instantly, be released and liberated once and for all.

A correct understanding of this law of righteousness will free you from all fear, from all attachments and from all aversion at once. Mark well that the Lord does not say that at any time righteousness will be defeated, will be destroyed. No, no. no. How can it be, for righteousness is God Himself? The very nature of phenomena is duality. Samsara is founded upon the principle of duality. The dual forces of good and evil, heat and cold, righteousness and unrighteousness - invariably exist in all created things. Their proportion is very fluctuating. Sometimes, one seems to predominate; sometimes the other. Even when pious men cry out: "Dharma is in danger!" it only means that Dharma is in as great a danger as a rock is when a huge mud-pot is hurled upon it; as flame is when a moth attacks it in great fury; as a sharp knife is when a packet of butter attempts to cut it (the knife) into two. Remember: Satyameva Jayate, truth alone triumphs (not truth triumphs ultimately) here now and always everywhere. Adharma exists here only in order to inspire you to be righteous to align yourself with the divine forces of righteousness here, thus to reincarnate the Lord in your own heart, and to release yourself from the wheel of birth

and death. If you are righteous, you not only achieve this grand purpose of life, but at the same time you weaken the cosmic forces of evil by non-cooperating with them and you strengthen the cosmic forces of righteousness by adding your own weight to them. This aspiration in you to become righteous is the incarnation of the Lord that he has promised in the Gita. Look for Him there. You will always enjoy success, prosperity and ineffable bliss. You will be freed from fear: for you will realise that as you are on the side of the Divine forces, you will never experience misery, failure or pain. You will understand the Divine Law that governs all creation; and you will not be attached to anything, for attachment is the foremost form of unrighteousness. You will be the abode of Divine virtues; your entire being will be divine. In short, you will share His Nature, you will attain what the Lord calls 'Mat-Bhava' (My Bhava). You become one with Him. You will shine as a Beacon light to the entire world. You will roam about freely in this life here and now as a Jivanmukta. May God bless you to become a Yogi, saint or sage here and now! At every turn in the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord springs surprises at us! After assuring us that He, too, has had "a number of births," the Lord suddenly declares: "He who knows Me as the Unborn, Eternal, and the Supreme Lord of the Universe, is the wise among men and he is released from all sins."

Where is God? Who is God?

Turn again to the Gita for an answer. Krishna gives us a picturesque description of His real nature: "The entire creation is strung on Me as beads on a thread;" "I am the thread that links everything in creation." It is not as though the created beings are separate entities and the Lord isa connecting link. He is the seed of all creation. In that wonderful Sloka:

Brahmarpanam Brahma-havih Brahmagnau
Brahmana Hutam
Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam Brahma-karma Samadhina

He emphatically declares that He and He alone exists as everything. He says: "I am the origin, continuum and culmination of all beings." He warns us, too, not to think that He is just all this creation and nothing more by asserting that merely by a small part to Himself He pervades the creation! All is God and God alone. Everything is God. There is nothing here but God. But, then why does Bhagavan say that He incarnates Himself again and again? There is a mysterious power in this universe. It is not something apart from God. It is His Power only. It has three distinct currents: Sattva which is the tranquil, pure and resplendent; Rajas the dynamic and passionate; and Tamas the dull and inert. These three combine in various degrees and proportions and constitute the created world. Such is the nature of this mysterious power that the pure aspect is nearer the Reality, the dynamic-aspect disturbs its perception and the dull-aspect thickly veils it. The dynamic (Rajasic) aspect is mostly the deciding factor; for all created beings have a good share of this quality of Maya. It is because of this that the mind insists on being restless, though restlessness tires it. It is because of this mysterious illusory power that the human mind imagines the enemy in one and the beloved in another, beauty in one and ugliness in another, success in some event and failure in another, heat in one condition

and cold in another, praise in some words and censure in others. And, it is on account of the presence in large measure of this quality in the person that he reacts in a Rajasic, brutal, undivine way to circumstances and events, and this gives birth to unrighteousness.

In order to restore the balance in other words, in order to reduce this Rajas born evil and to increase the Sattva which is nearer to Himself the Lord comes into the world of man in various ways. The purpose is to restore Dharma; and, therefore, we always find that His incarnation is an embodiment of Dharma; though the forms vary in accordance with the time and the need.

Human conduct is dynamic. There is continual change in man's mode of thought, his understanding and his outlook. The play of the three Gunas goes on within him and constantly vary the elements of righteousness and unrighteousness in him. This itself is part of the Divine Play that the Lord should look on while Maya plays Her role and brings about an increase in unrighteousness and then re-incarnate Himself in order to increase righteousness. Thus, we have the various Avataras of the Lord described in the Puranas. This is the cosmic play.

In the individual, too, the three Gunas operate, constantly bringing about various states of consciousness. His duty consists therefore in increasing the Sattva in him so that he may approach God near and ultimately attain a Vision of God and union with Him.

In the Gita the Lord has given, in order to help the Sadhaka in this regard, a complete catalogue of Sattvic things resorting to which he will completely transcend the limitations imposed upon his consciousness by Rajas and Tamas. Increase in Sattva makes his perception subtle. He is able to transcend the realm of name and form and perceive the Lord, the Supreme Substratum underlying all names and forms.

Not only this. The Lord has in His Supreme Mercy for His children, given them in the Gita another wonderful prop with the help of which he can reach the realm of the Infinite. Study the Vibhuti Yoga Adhyaya. The Lord describes Himself as the various good things in this world with which we come across daily or frequently. "I am all this," He says. We are reminded again that That Supreme Impersonal Absolute alone appears as all these. Every time we perceive these objects, we are reminded of Him. Thus, side by side with the increase of Sattva in us, we are enabled to live in continuous God-consciousness. The increase in Sattva within enables us to remove the veil of name and form and to perceive the Essence in them. Gradually the consciousness expands and we realise that in all names and forms He and He alone exists. Eating, drinking, sleeping, seeing, speaking, tasting, smelling all the time, everywhere, we are aware of the Supreme Presence of the Lord in and through all names and forms. That is the Truth the Reality, God, that incarnates Itself again and again in order to awaken man to the true nature of God. That is the Goal. The Bhagavad Gita enables you reach that goal through a path which is pleasant, smooth and joyous, easy to tread a direct road to God-realisation. May you all tread the Path; may you all prsummum bonum actise the yoga of the Bhagavad Gita and attain the of life in this very birth!

TWENTY IMPORTANT SPIRITUAL INSTRUCTIONS

By

H.H. Sri Swami Sivanandaji Maharaj

1. **BRAHMA-MUHURTA:** Get up at 4 a.m. daily.

This is Brahmamuhurta which is extremely favourable for meditation on God.
2. **ASANA:** Sit on Padma, Siddha or Sukha Asana for Japa and meditation for half an hour, facing the east or the north. Increase the period gradually to three hours.
Do Sirshasana and Sarvangasana for keeping up Brahmacharya and health. Take light physical exercises as walking, etc., regularly. Do twenty Pranayamas.
3. **JAPA:** Repeat any Mantra as pure Om or Om Namo Narayanaya, Om Namah Sivaya, Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya, Om Saravanabhavaya Namah, Sita Ram, Sri Ram, Hari Om, or Gayatri, according to your taste or inclination, from 108 to 21,600 times daily.
4. **DIETETIC DISCIPLINE:** Take Sattvic food, Suddha Ahara. Give up chillies, tamarind, garlic, onion, sour articles, oil, mustard, asafoetida. Observe moderation in diet (Mitahara). Do not overload the stomach. Give up those things which the mind likes best for a fortnight in a year. Eat simple food. Milk and fruits help concentration. Take food as medicine to keep the life going. Eating for enjoyment is sin. Give up salt and sugar for a month. You must be able to live on rice, Dhal and bread without any Chutni. Do not ask for extra salt for Dhal and sugar for tea, coffee or milk.
5. **MEDITATION-ROOM:** Have a separate meditation-room under lock and key.
6. **CHARITY:** Do charity regularly, every month, or even daily according to your means, say six Paisa per rupee.
7. **SVADHYAYA:** Study systematically the Gita, the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, Sri Vishnu-Sahasranama, Lalita-Sahasranama, Aditya g Hridaya, the Upanishads or the Yoga Vasishtha, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Koran, the Tripitakas, the Granth Sahib; etc., from half an hour to one hour daily and have Suddha Vichara.
8. **BRAHMACHARYA:** Preserve the vital force (Veerya) very, very carefully. Veerya is God in motion or manifestation Vibhuti. Veerya is all power. Veerya is all money. Veerya is the essence of life, thought and intelligence.
9. **PRAYER SLOKAS:** Get by heart some prayer-Slokas, Stotras and repeat them as soon as you sit in the Asana before starting Japa or meditation. This will elevate the mind quickly.
10. **SATSANGA:** Have Satsanga. Give up bad company, smoking, meat and alcoholic liquors entirely. Do not develop any evil habits.
11. **FAST ON EKADASI:** Fast on Ekadasi or live on milk and fruits only.
12. **JAPA MALA:** Have a Japa Mala (rosary)
round your neck or in your pocket or underneath your pillow at night.
13. **MOUNA:** Observe Mouna (vow of silence) for a couple of hours daily.
14. **SPEAK THE TRUTH:** Speak the truth at all cost. Speak a little. Speak sweetly.
15. **PLAIN LIVING:** Reduce your wants. If you have four shirts, reduce the number to three or two. Lead a happy, contented life. Avoid unnecessary worry. Have plain living and high thinking.
16. **NEVER HURT ANYBODY:** Never hurt anybody (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah). Control anger by love, Kshama (forgiveness) and Daya (compassion).
17. **DO NOT DEPEND UPON SERVANTS:** Do not depend upon servants. Self-reliance is the highest of all virtues.
18. **SELF-ANALYSIS**: Think of the mistakes you have committed during the course of the day, just before retiring to bed (self-analysis). Keep daily diary and self-correction register. Do not brood over past mistakes.

19. **FULFIL DUTIES:** Remember that death is awaiting you at every moment. Never fail to fulfil your duties.
Have pure conduct (Sadachard).
20. **SURRENDER TO GOD:** Think of God as soon as you wake up and just before you go to sleep. Surrender yourself completely to God (Sharanagati)

Om Santih Santih Santih!

This is the essence of all spiritual Sadhanas.
This will lead you to Moksha.
All these Niyamas or spiritual canons must be rigidly observed. You must not give leniency to the mind.